



Catalogue 91-543E Occasional

Government  
Publications

# Family over the Life Course

*Current Demographic Analysis*



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Canada

## Data in Many Forms...

Statistics Canada disseminates data in a variety of forms. In addition to publications, both standard and special tabulations are offered. Data are available on CD, diskette, computer print-out, microfiche and microfilm, and magnetic tape. Maps and other geographic reference materials are available for some types of data. Direct online access to aggregated information is possible through CANSIM, Statistics Canada's machine-readable database and retrieval system.

## How to Obtain More Information

Inquiries about this publication and related statistics or services should be directed to:

Research and Analysis Section,  
Demography Division,

Statistics Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0T6 (Telephone: 1-613-951-2327) or to the Statistics Canada reference centre in:

Halifax	(1-902-426-5331)	Regina	(1-306-780-5405)
Montréal	(1-514-283-5725)	Edmonton	(1-403-495-3027)
Ottawa	(1-613-951-8116)	Calgary	(1-403-292-6717)
Toronto	(1-416-973-6586)	Vancouver	(1-604-666-3691)
Winnipeg	(1-204-983-4020)		

Toll-free access is provided in all provinces and territories, **for users who reside outside the local dialing area** of any of the regional reference centres.

Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, New  
Brunswick and Prince Edward Island

1-800-565-7192

Quebec

1-800-361-2831

Ontario

1-800-263-1136

Saskatchewan

1-800-667-7164

Manitoba

1-800-661-7828

Southern Alberta

1-800-882-5616

Alberta and Northwest Territories

1-800-563-7828

British Columbia and Yukon

1-800-663-1551

**Telecommunications Device for the  
Hearing Impaired**

**1-800-363-7629**

**Toll Free Order Only Line (Canada and  
United States)**

**1-800-267-6677**

## How to Order Publications

This and other Statistics Canada publications may be purchased from local authorized agents and other community bookstores, through the local Statistics Canada offices, or by mail order to Marketing Division, Sales and Service, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0T6.

(1-613-951-7277)

Facsimile Number (1-613-951-1584)

Toronto

Toronto Credit Card Only (1-416-973-8018)

## Standards of Service to the Public

To maintain quality service to the public, Statistics Canada follows established standards covering statistical products and services, delivery of statistical information, cost-recovered services and service to respondents. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.



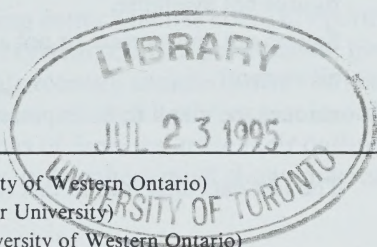


Statistics Canada  
Demography Division

Government  
Publications

# Family over the Life Course

*Current Demographic Analysis*



**Roderic Beaujot** (University of Western Ontario)  
**Ellen M. Gee** (Simon Fraser University)  
**Fernando Rajulton** (University of Western Ontario)  
**Zenaida R. Ravanera** (University of Western Ontario)

Jean Dumas  
Editor, Demography Division

Published by authority of the Minister  
responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 1995

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission from Licence Services, Marketing Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.

July 1995

Price: Canada: \$38.00  
United States: US\$46.00  
Other Countries: US\$54.00

Catalogue No. 91-543E

ISBN 0-660-15565-6

Ottawa

The text was originally written in English  
Version française de cette publication disponible sur demande  
(n° 91-543F au catalogue)

---

## Note of Appreciation

*Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing cooperation involving Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.*

## Symbols

- .. figures not available.
- ... figures not appropriate or not applicable.
- nil or zero.
- - amount too small to be expressed.

The last data analysed in this report were those available at time of writing.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences - Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48 - 1984.





## Preface

The family is a complex and changing entity which is not easily portrayed within the constraints of the statistical system. Certain phenomena, like the spread of common-law unions, have only recently attracted attention; because of a lack of historical data, little is known of their early stages. In order to determine the evolution of various types of families, trace their outline and analyze their principal characteristics, researchers must show imagination and exploit a range of data sources.

The studies presented in this report well illustrate the analytical possibilities implicit in the combined use of data from the census and from focussed surveys. Because of the breadth of the operation, the census provides only summary information on each topic addressed; however, it yields data over a long time horizon. Based on relatively small samples, surveys of family life fill the gaps left by the census but without being able to provide the same historical depth. Taken together, the census and survey data permit a much better, albeit far from complete, understanding of the continuing evolution of family life in Canada. Hopefully, the studies presented in this report will contribute to that understanding.

Ivan P. Fellegi  
Chief Statistician of Canada

# CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

## Production team :

Director of the Demography Division:	<i>Réjean Lachapelle</i>
Editor in chief:	<i>Jean Dumas</i>
Managing editor:	<i>Alain Bélanger</i>
Editor:	<i>Gordon Smith</i>
Desktop publishing:	<i>Carol D'Aoust</i>

## In the same series:

- *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1983*, by J. Dumas  
- 129 pages (out of print).
- *Fertility in Canada, from Baby-boom to Baby-bust*, by A. Romaniuc  
- 156 pages - \$12
- *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1986*, by J. Dumas  
- 139 pages - \$15
  - Childbearing Performance of Married Canadian-born Women
  - The Strengthening of Majority Positions - by R. Lachapelle
- *Income of Immigrants*, by R. Beaujot, K.G. Basavarajappa and R.B.P. Verma - 106 pages - \$20
- *Caribbean Immigrants*, by A. Richmond - 85 pages - \$25
- *New Trends in the Family*, by B. Ram - 96 pages - \$25
- *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1988*, by J. Dumas  
- 158 pages - \$21
  - The Termination of Pregnancy in a Population Perspective
  - Long-term Consequences of Adolescent Marriage and Fertility, by C. Grindstaff
- *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1990*, by J. Dumas  
- 113 pages - \$26
  - Recent Evolution of the Canadian and American Populations



- ***Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1991***, by J. Dumas  
- 187 pages - \$26
  - Overview of the Principal World Migratory Flows Since World War II
- ***Marriage and Conjugal Life in Canada***, by J. Dumas and Y. Péron -  
167 pages - \$38
- ***Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1992***, by J. Dumas  
- 161 pages - \$26
  - Age Structure in Mutation - Two Centuries of Demographic Change,  
by Y. Lavoie
- ***Aging of the Population and Seniors in Canada***, by B. Desjardins -  
128 pages - \$40
- ***Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1993***, by J. Dumas  
- 227 pages - \$26
  - Mexico's Demographic Challenges (An Overview)
- ***Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1994***, by J. Dumas  
and A. Bélanger - 227 pages - \$30
  - The Sandwich Generation: Myths and Reality

**Coming Soon: *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1995*,**  
by J. Dumas and A. Bélanger

## FOR FURTHER READING

Selected Publications from Statistics Canada

Title	Catalogue
<b>Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada 1994, Annual</b>	91-209E
<b>Annual Demographic Statistics 1993, Annual</b>	91-213
<b>Perspectives on Labour and Income, Quarterly</b>	75-001E

To order a publication you may telephone 1-613-951-7277 or use facsimile number 1-613-951-1584. For toll free in Canada only telephone 1-800-267-6677. When ordering by telephone or facsimile a written confirmation is not required.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to all those who have contributed to the realization of this publication and in particular to Guy DESPLANQUES of the Institut National d'Études Démographiques in Paris, Jean VEEVERS of the Department of Sociology of the University of Victoria and J. CHE-ALFORD of Statistics Canada for their comments and suggestions.

Very sincere thanks are owed to everyone in the "Current Demographic Analysis" production team in Statistics Canada, as well as to Linda DIOTTE for word processing, Suzanne DAVID for data verification and Marc SAINT LAURENT for checking the French version.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Highlights</b> .....	1
The Families of Young People .....	1
The Families of Middle-Aged Persons .....	2
The Families of Older People .....	3
<b>Introduction</b> .....	5
<b>Chapter 1 - A Portrait of the Family Life of Young Adults</b> .....	7
Introduction .....	7
Marital Status: Family Formation among Young Adults .....	8
Cultural and Socio-Economic Differentials in Marital Status .....	13
Parental Status: Childbearing in Early Adult Life .....	16
Cultural and Socio-Economic Differentials in Parental Status .....	20
Living Arrangements of Young Adults .....	21
Living Arrangements of Never-Married Young Adults .....	22
Living Arrangements of Previously-Married Young Adults .....	24
Cultural and Socio-Economic Differentials in Living Arrangements .....	25
Discussion .....	28
School Attendance, Work Status and Income of Young Adults .....	28
School Attendance .....	29
Work Status .....	30
Individual Income .....	32
Some Concluding Remarks .....	34
<b>Chapter 2 - Family Patterns at Mid-Life (Marriage, Parenting and Working)</b> .....	37
Introduction .....	37
Marital Status at Mid-Life .....	37
Categories of Marital Status .....	37
Married .....	39
Widowed and Divorced .....	39
The 1971 Turnaround .....	39
Marital Status Including Cohabitation .....	40
First and Subsequent Unions .....	40
The Common Life Trajectories .....	42
Living Arrangements at Mid-Life .....	44
Patterns by Age and Sex .....	44
Differences by Place of Birth and Education .....	46
Summary of Living Arrangements .....	47

## TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

	Page
Parental Status: Adults at Mid-Life and Children .....	47
Children Ever Born .....	49
Children Ever Born for all Marital-Status Categories, 1991 .....	49
Living with Children for Women and Men .....	51
Intended Births .....	54
Childlessness .....	55
Differentials by Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics .....	55
Socio-Cultural and Geographic Characteristics .....	55
Socio-Economic Characteristics .....	57
Conclusion on Differentials .....	57
Families, Parenthood and Work .....	58
Proportions Employed by Gender .....	58
Proportions Employed by Gender and Marital Status .....	59
Proportions Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed .....	61
Change over Time .....	61
By Presence of Children .....	61
By Presence of Spouse .....	63
By Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children .....	63
Individual Income .....	65
By Presence of Children .....	65
By Presence of Spouse .....	67
By Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children .....	67
Conclusion on Individual Income .....	70
Family Income .....	70
Conclusion .....	72
Implications of Family and Work Patterns: The Problems of Discontinuity .....	73
Implications for Inequality .....	74
<b>Chapter 3 - Families in Later Life</b> .....	77
Introduction .....	77
Marital Status of the Population Aged 55 and Over .....	79
The Distribution of Marital Statuses, 1921 to 1991 .....	79
Age and Gender Variations in Marital Status .....	81
Remarriage .....	82
Other Variations in Marital Status .....	84
Parental Status of the Population Aged 55 and Over .....	89
Children Ever Born, 1941 to 1991 .....	89
Childlessness .....	89
Variations in Children Ever Born .....	90
Surviving Children .....	93



## TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

	Page
Living Arrangements of the Population Aged 55 and Over .....	95
Living Arrangements, 1981 to 1991 .....	95
Multi-Generational Family Living Arrangements .....	96
Living Alone: Incidence and Trends .....	99
Living Arrangements and Marital Status, 1991 .....	100
Living Arrangements and Parenthood, 1990 .....	103
Other Variations in Living Arrangements .....	104
Family Transitions of People in Later Life .....	106
Interaction within Older Families .....	108
Conclusion .....	112
 <b>Chapter 4 - The Family Life Course in Twentieth-Century Canada:</b>	
<b>Changes, Trends and Interrelationships .....</b>	<b>115</b>
Introduction .....	115
The Family Life Course .....	115
A Cohort Perspective .....	116
The Stages of the Family Life Course .....	117
Methodology .....	118
Changes and Trends in Life Course Transitions .....	118
Changes and Trends Related to Family Formation .....	119
Leaving Home .....	119
First Marriage .....	122
First Union .....	124
First Birth .....	124
Changes Related to Family Extension .....	127
Second and Third Births .....	127
Changes and Trends Related to Dissolution and Reconstitution of Families .....	130
Widowhood versus Separation and Divorce .....	130
Changes Related to the Launching of Children .....	136
The First Child in the Family Leaves Home .....	136
The Last Child in the Family Leaves Home .....	138
Summary .....	138
Sequences of Transitions in the Family Life Course .....	139
Conclusion .....	145
Methodology Note .....	146
The Life-Table Approach to Censored Life Histories .....	146
 <b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>151</b>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

	Page
<b>References .....</b>	<b>167</b>
 <b>Tables</b>	
1.1 Population Aged 15-29 Cohabiting, Legally Married and Separated by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent) .....	10
1.2 Percentage with at Least One Child among Women Aged 15-29, by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991 .....	18
1.3 Distribution (in Percent) of the Intended Number of Children in the Population Aged 15-29, by Five-Year Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1990 .....	19
1.4 Percentage Living Alone in the Population Aged 15-24 by Sex, Canada, 1961 to 1991 .....	22
1.5 Distribution (in Percent) of the Living Arrangements of Never-Married Population Aged 15-29 by Three-Year Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991 .....	23
1.6 Distribution (in Percent) of the Living Arrangements of Previously Married People in the Two Specific Age Groups 24-26 and 27-29, by Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991 .....	24
1.7 Distribution (in Percent) of the Living Arrangements of the Previously Married Population Aged 27-29 by Sex, Mother Tongue and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991 .....	26
1.8 Percentage of Full-Time Students in the Population Aged 15-29, by Three-Year Age Group, Marital Status and Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991 .....	29
1.9 Labour Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rate by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1951 to 1991 .....	30
1.10 Percentage Employed Full Time in the Population Aged 15-29, By Age Group, Marital Status and Sex, Canada, 1970, 1980 and 1990 .....	31
1.11 Average Individual Income (Thousands of 1990 Dollars) of Those Employed Full Time in the Population Aged 15-29, By Age Group, Marital Status and Sex, Canada, 1970, 1980 and 1990 .....	33
2.1 Marital Status of Population Aged 30-54 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921-1991 (in Percent) .....	38
2.2 Marital Status of Population Aged 30-55 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent) .....	41



## TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

Tables	Page
2.3 Marital Status of Population Aged 30-54 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990 (in Percent) .....	42
2.4 Union Status Changes Between Ages 30 and 54, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911-1950 .....	43
2.5 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 30-54 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent) .....	45
2.6 Living Arrangements by Sex and Place of Birth, for Population Aged 30-54, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent) .....	46
2.7 Living Arrangements by Sex and Level of Schooling for Population Aged 30-54, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent) .....	47
2.8 Women Ever Married by Age Group, Showing Children Ever Born, Canada, 1941-1991 (in Percent) .....	48
2.9 Children Ever Born to Women Aged 30-54 by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991 .....	50
2.10 Children Ever Born and Children Currently Living with Parents for Women and Men Aged 30-54, by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1990 .....	52
2.11 Intended Number of Children by Age, Sex and Marital Status, Canada, 1990 .....	54
2.12 Average Number of Children Ever Born to Ever-Married Women Aged 30-34, 40-44 and 50-54, Showing Mother Tongue, Place of Birth, Region, Education, Work Status, and Income, Canada, 1971-1991 .....	56
2.13 Labour-Force Participation Rate and Employment / Population Ratio, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1931-1991 .....	58
2.14 Labour-Force Participation Rate and Employment / Population Ratio by Sex, Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1951-1991 ..	59
2.15 Proportion Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Sex and Marital Status, Ages 35-44 and 45-54, Canada, 1971-1991 .	60
2.16 Proportion Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed by Sex, Presence of Children and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1991 .....	62
2.17 Proportion Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Presence of Spouse and Five-Year Age Group, Ages 30-54, Canada, 1991 .....	63
2.18 Average Individual Income (Thousands of Dollars) of Persons Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Sex, Five-Year Age Group and Presence of Children, Canada, 1990 .....	66

**TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued**

<b>Tables</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.19 Average Individual Income from Employment (Thousands of Dollars) of Persons Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Sex, Five-Year Age Group and Presence of Spouse, Canada, 1990 .....	67
2.20 Average Family Income (Thousands of Dollars) of Persons with Various Family Statuses, by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990 .....	71
3.1 Composition of the Population Aged 55 and Over, by Age Group, Sex and Sex Ratios, Canada, 1921 to 1991 .....	78
3.2 Percentage of Previously Married People Experiencing Remarriages, and Median Age at Remarriage, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1990 .....	82
3.3 Marital Status of Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Sex and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1981 and 1991 .....	86
3.4 Ever-Married Women Aged 55 and Over by Age Group, Showing Number of Children Ever Born, Canada, 1941-1991 .....	88
3.5 Women Aged 55 and Over by Number of Children Ever Born, by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991 .....	91
3.6 Average Number of Children Ever Born (per 1,000 Ever-Married Women) and Percent of Ever-Married Women with No and 5+ Children Ever Born, for Age Groups 60-64 and 75-79, Showing Mother Tongue, Place of Birth, Region or Place of Residence, Educational Attainment and Individual Income, Canada, 1991 .....	92
3.7 Percentage Distribution of Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991 .....	96
3.8 Number and Percentage of Persons Aged 55 and Over Living Alone, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1931 to 1991 .....	99
3.9 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex, Ten-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991 .....	101
3.10 Percentage Distribution of Marital Status of Persons Aged 55 and Over in Collective Households and in Private Households, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1991 .....	102
3.11 Percentage of Persons Aged 55 and Over, Married and Living with Close Relatives or Non-Married and Living Alone, by Age Group and Number of Surviving Children, Canada, 1990 .....	104
3.12 Percentage of Transitions After Age 54, by Immediately Preceding Event, Gender and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1990 .....	107



## TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

Tables	Page
3.13 Frequency and Type of Contact with Children and Siblings, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990 (in Percent) .....	109
3.14 Percentage of Persons Aged 65 and Over Receiving Informal Assistance, Showing Sources of Assistance, by Sex, Age and Marital Status, Canada, 1990 .....	110
3.15 Percentage of Persons Aged 65 and Over Receiving Various Types of Informal Assistance, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1990 .....	111
4.1 Positional Measures of Duration at Births of Order One to Three, and Median Age at Last Birth, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	129
4.2 Duration in Years Since the First Marriage at Its Dissolution, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	131
4.3 Duration in Years Since First Marriage at Its Dissolution by Separation or Divorce, by Sex and Birth Cohort for a Few Percentiles, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	132
4.4 Duration in Years Since Dissolution of First Marriage at Second Marriage, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1960 .....	134
4.5 Positional Measures of Age at First and Last Home-Leaving of Children, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1950 .....	137
4.6 Probabilities of Transitions According to Four Types of Sequence, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	143
4.7 Data and First Marriage Table for Persons Aged 30-39 at the Survey .....	147
 <b>Appendices</b>	
A1.1 Population Aged 15-29 By Marital Status, Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921 to 1991 (in Percent) .....	152
A1.2 Percentage Married in the Population Aged 15-29 By Age Group, Sex, Mother Tongue and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1971, 1981 and 1991 .....	153
A1.3 Percentage Cohabiting and Legally Married in the Population Aged 15-29 By Age Group, Sex, Mother Tongue and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991 .....	154
A1.4 Percentage Distribution of Ever-Married Women 15-29 By Children Ever-Born by Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1941 to 1991 .....	155
A1.5 Percentage Childless among Ever-Married Women Aged 15-29 by Five-Year Age Group, Mother Tongue, Educational Attainment, Work Status and School Attendance, Canada, 1971, 1981 and 1991 ..	156

## TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

Appendices	Page
A3.1 Legal Marital Status of the Population Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921 to 1991 (in Percent) .....	157
A3.2 Marital Status Distribution of Population (in Percent) Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990 .....	159
A3.3 Marital Status of Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1971 to 1991 .....	160
A3.4 Percentage of Unmarried Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Income and Sex, Canada, 1991 .....	161
A3.5 Average Number of Children Ever Born, Total Children and Surviving Children, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1990 .....	162
A3.6 Percent of Population Aged 55 and Over with No Surviving Children and with 5 + Surviving Children, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1990 .....	162
A3.7 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1991 .....	163
A3.8 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Showing Mother Tongue, Place of Birth and Individual Income, Canada, 1991 .....	164
 Figure	
1.1 Percentage Married in the Population Aged 15-29, by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921 to 1991 .....	9
1.2 Percentage Cohabiting among Those in a Union Aged 15-29 by Five-Year Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991 .....	11
1.3A Percentage Married in the Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1971 to 1991 .....	14
1.3B Percentage Cohabiting in the Married Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1991 .....	14
1.4A Percentage Married in the Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1971-1991 .....	15
1.4B Percentage Cohabiting in the Married Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991 .....	16
1.5 Percentage with at Least One Child among Ever-Married Women Aged 15-29 by Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1941 to 1991 .....	17
1.6 Percentage with at Least One Child Among Ever-Married Women Aged 25-29 by Mother Tongue, Educational Attainment, Work Status and School Attendance, Canada, 1991 .....	20

**TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued**

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.7 Percentage Living with Parents and Living Independently in the Never-Married Population Aged 27-29 by Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1991 .....	25
1.8 Percentage Living with Parents and Living Independently in the Never-Married Population Aged 27-29 by Sex and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991 .....	27
2.1 Proportion Working Full Time, by Sex, Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children Aged 0-14, Persons Aged 40-44, Canada, 1991 .....	64
2.2 Average Individual Employment Income (Thousands of Dollars), by Sex, Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children Aged 0-14, Persons Aged 40-44, Canada, 1990 .....	68
2.3 Average Individual Employment Income (Thousands of Dollars), by Sex, Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children Aged 0-14, Persons Working Full Time Aged 40-44, Canada, 1990 .....	69
3.1 Legal Marital Status of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex, Canada, 1921 to 1991 .....	80
3.2 Marital Status of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990 .....	83
3.3 Marital Status of Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Age, Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1971 and 1991 .....	85
3.4 Income (in 1990 Dollars) of Unmarried People Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Sex, Canada, 1991 .....	87
3.5 Average Number of Children Ever Born, Total Children and Surviving Children, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1990 .....	93
3.6 Percentage of Population Aged 55 and Over with No Surviving Children and with 5 + Surviving Children, by Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1990 .....	94
3.7 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1991 .....	97
3.8 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Age Group, Showing Mother Tongue, Place of Birth and Individual Income, Canada, 1991 .....	105
4.1 Median and Interquartile Range of Age at Home-Leaving by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	120
4.2 Median and Interquartile Range of Age at First Marriage by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	123



**TABLE OF CONTENTS - Concluded**

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.3 Median Age at First Union and at First Marriage by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	125
4.4 Median and Interquartile Range of Age at First Birth by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970 .....	126
4.5 Cumulative Percentages Separated / Divorced by Sex and Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1960 .....	133
4.6 Cumulative Percentages Remarried by Sex and Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1960 .....	135
4.7a Cumulative Proportion Experiencing Family Life Events in Selected Cohorts of Men, Canada, 1911 to 1960 .....	140
4.7b Cumulative Proportion Experiencing Family Life Events in Selected Cohorts of Women, Canada, 1911 to 1960 .....	141

## Highlights

The family is an entity that, over the course of history, has shown a remarkable capacity for adapting itself continuously to prevailing social and economic conditions. At the moment the changes affecting it in the western world are striking. It is first of all evident that family formation has lost the uniformity and formality it had heretofore. Marriage on reaching adulthood after completing studies or an apprenticeship is no longer the institution which initiates the creation of a family. Because of changing values and the effectiveness of contraception, couples are now formed more informally. Partners are averse to commitment at the beginning of their life together. The union can thus be easily dissolved and the partners forming the couple may even sometimes rejoin their family of origin. It must be said that marriage today hardly guarantees a more permanent union, given how easy it has become to obtain a divorce.

## The Families of Young People

The small size of families has resulted in a lessening of the pressure experienced by children. Those of the large families of the past sought their independence and founded their own households very early. On the contrary, more and more of them are now seen delaying their departure from the parental home, profiting from its advantages while they await economic conditions favourable to setting themselves up comfortably. As a consequence, living alone, which began becoming more common twenty years ago, seems to be somewhat in decline and the trend is reinforced by the fact that, if they are not married or in a common-law union, young adults tend to live with persons to whom they are not related. It goes without saying that these situations go hand in hand with a fertility level that is neither high nor early.

It was believed when these behaviours emerged that they were specific to lower socio-economic strata and to persons with little education, but they are now observed at all levels of society. A concomitant development is that ascribed characteristics like language or religion are now no longer responsible for the small variations in fertility still remaining in a homogenizing society. On the contrary, it is achieved characteristics like education or labour-force status which explain them much better. But the effect of the changes in the formation of families on fertility is not very clear. In contrast to a recent past when most common-law unions were fleeting and sterile, more and more children are being born into such unions, but it is necessary to say that, whatever may be the type of union, the childbearing intentions of young adults have become very modest. Even if few respondents state that they

do not wish to have children, birth registrations show all the same that the number of women headed for childlessness is on an upward trend.

In a Canadian society receptive to immigration, this new behaviour of young adults is observed to be less marked among immigrants than among the Canadian-born. Lastly, household structure and individual income are linked, the married having the higher average income. It may be family responsibilities that stimulate a person's energies to try to improve the family's status, but it could just as easily be the fact of having higher a income which makes marriage possible: those of more modest means might hesitate to commit themselves.

### **The Families of Middle-Aged Persons**

Due to the fact that common-law unions and living alone have only become popular in roughly the last two decades and that not everyone finds life in these sorts of domestic arrangement suitable, when one studies the group of adults aged 30 to 54 one notes that the majority live in families formed by a legal union and with two children. All the same, this majority narrows as those who, when young, adopted the new household structures reach this age group. Of those in the 30-54 age group in 1991, one notes that 23% are neither married nor cohabiting and that 35% do not have children. In terms of offspring, men and women in this group of adults do not consider their family to be complete and most expect to have two or more children. It is interesting to observe that men on average anticipate having more children than women. For example, in the 30-34 age group, grouping all marital statuses, men foresee having on average 2.0 to 2.2 children and women only 1.9 to 2.1, and in older age groups men foresee even more children still to come than women do. As for infertility, considering women who have completed their fertile span, i.e., those aged 45 to 54, one observes that it has not increased much since 1981. Its level is still below what was observed in the 1941 and 1971 censuses, but it is on the rise.

In this age group it is normal that labour-force participation should be at its peak. Nevertheless, for both sexes, 14% do not have a job and 24% work only part time or for part of the year. As logic would suggest, it is among the unmarried that the difference between the sexes is least marked, the data supporting this hypothesis since 66% of single men and 72% of single women work full time, and the employment income of women equals 94% that of men. On the other hand, it is among the married that the differences are greatest. For example, in the 30-34 age group with spouse and children, 81% of men but only 35% of women work full time, and the employment income of women amounts to only 49% of that of men.

It is in this group of adults that one meets the largest number of women heads of single-parent families, for whom work interruptions and uncertain



employment present the most severe conditions. These women represent 74% of all heads of single-parent families with children under the age of 15, and their income represents 70% of that of their male counterparts.

One may respond to these statistics by suggesting facetiously that, as far as marriage and the family are concerned, the best way to achieve equality of the sexes is to remain single and childless.

It may also be observed that more men who are better off are married than men who are less well off while the opposite is the case for women. In a certain sense men buy into marriage, while women who achieve a higher social status do so at the cost of remaining celibate.

## **The Families of Older People**

Until recently there was very little interest in the families of people who were advancing in years. There are now three good reasons for paying attention to them. First, the aging of the population, which is raising the profile of seniors; second, the influence of feminism on society and in the social sciences that study it; and finally, the growing interest in the life-course perspective. This last, by taking into account individual histories, draws attention to the relations between the generations and hence to the lot of older people.

The circumstance having the most influence on the level of well-being of older persons is, in the unanimous opinion of the research community, marital status in so far as this has a considerable effect on the socio-economic position of women. In this open-ended age group it is obviously the married who form the majority, but as the group is broken down by age, the proportion of widowers and even more of widows becomes more significant. Men die younger than women so that the marriage market favours them in terms of the likelihood of remarriage. As for other types of household structure, given that common-law unions and to a lesser degree divorce are peculiar to recent generations, they represent the living arrangement of few older people.

While for men in this age group little relationship is observed between income and marital status, the position of women is quite different. Their economic status depends moreover on what their personal history was, i.e., the history of their household structure and of their inheritance. Due to the fact that a large part of the women of these generations was not in the labour force, widowhood often puts them in a precarious position. By reason precisely of the different ways that men and women have lived, older single men are observed to have relatively modest incomes while among older women it is those who are single who have the highest proportion with high income.

Contrary to a still recent past, very few of the older women of today have remained childless compared to those of preceding generations; in effect the youngest of them are the fertile mothers of the baby-boomers. But it is nevertheless necessary to note that the oldest widows have on average fewer children still living than the youngest widows. This is, of course, explained by the mortality which strikes at any age, but also in part by the fact that a certain number of them became widows relatively young by reason of the high male mortality of an earlier time, which cut short their reproductive period. In any case, it is less the number of children brought into the world which matters for the help they can provide as the fact of having or not having at least one still living. Despite the considerations mentioned and other minor matters, it remains that at the beginning of the 1990s in the age group 75 and older, 21% of men and 24% of women have no living child, while 18% of the former and 20% of the latter have five or more.

Living in multi-generational households obviously becomes less common with age, but it may be observed all the same that many older persons living in private households live in households of at least two generations. This observation should qualify the idea that older people are isolated. In fact it is the tendency to equate household to family that is largely responsible for this belief, which is not well founded. On the contrary, older persons have numerous contacts with their children and with their own brothers and sisters although they live in separate households. But at the same ages, women generally have more contacts than men.

The study of life histories shows that the ordering of life-cycle states considered normative is in fact more typical of the lives of men than of women. In effect, the order in which widowhood and the departure of children occur is not the same for the two sexes. For women, the departure of children often occurs after widowhood rather than before, while the opposite is true for men.

Finally, among the numerous conclusions that can be drawn from the observations and analysis, two in particular merit mention. The first is that, for many reasons both social and demographic, older women function as "kin-keepers", maintaining the links among family members. The second is that, remarkably and unexpectedly, older people seem to have readily accepted the new lifestyles of their children, lifestyles often totally opposed to those they themselves adopted in their youth and maturity.

## Foreword

Intertwined with the “gens” of the Latins, the family in everyone’s mind has always been founded on the biological process of reproduction. Even if it was gradually restricted in its signification from a broad meaning to the narrower one of the couple and their children, its members, both ancestors and descendants, could not deny their membership. “You choose your friends but not your relatives”, people said when some disagreement with a member created an unpleasant situation. By internal policies of alliances and stratagems, certain families emerged. History remembers the great, but at all levels of western society the same patterns of selection existed. Mothers and fathers (heads of families) had ways of knowing which families they viewed favourably by virtue of possessions, health or conduct as ones for their children to join and which ones were the object of their proscription. Quite often this remained without effect, but their disapproval had been put on record so that, if the marriage came to grief, it could be blamed on marrying beneath oneself.

One will note that the concept of the biological family has been robust enough to extend itself to other domains. The recognition of the transmission of characteristics by heredity and an illusory and naive recourse to membership on the basis of an ancestor has been quite naturally adapted to beings or objects which show a resemblance, in reality or figuratively. There thus exist families of animals, of plants, but also of words, diseases, authors, languages, chemical molecules, etc.

Not to talk about an arrangement, an institution or a phenomenon is to allow it be understood that it is in a satisfactory condition. Thus, if for many centuries no one has talked much about the family, this doubtless was because it did not face major problems, or at least that its difficulties did not bring it into question. But since the 1960s there has been much talk about the family. It is now obvious that its study has shifted from the field of anthropology to that of sociology and this because more and more family members, by taking liberties with the norms of immemorial custom governing individual behaviour, have caused new forms of the basic unit of society to appear, have modified the ways it is formed and dissolved, and have changed the rules which regulate the relations between its members.

A dialogue of the deaf has developed between those who presently see the signs of its imminent disappearance and those who persist in the belief in its immortality. Not speaking of the same reality, each of them puts forward evidence of the conclusions they have reached that is difficult to refute.

As it is still impossible to imagine a world of individuals, totally independent and isolated, to whom reproduction is foreign, there will continue



to exist unions formed in various ways and for various reasons, transitory or lasting, of variable composition, in which successive generations will be born and grow up. In this sense, the proponents of the permanence of the family are certainly convincing. Their opponents, by offering as evidence of the disappearance of the family the increasing divorce rate and the proliferation of consensual unions, paradoxically support them. Far from being reduced, the number of families increases because often, more amazingly than the phoenix, a broken family is reborn doubled, and the more the length of its life is curtailed, the more its number is increased. But if the question is implicit in the discussion which is the subject of this work, it is not the major preoccupation of the debate.

In this publication, four social demographers have undertaken to describe how men and women set out in their family life and carry it on as their life unfolds. They show what changes have been witnessed in the recent past and what their most important implications are.

Of family members, the authors focus on post-adolescent individuals, that is, on those who are in a position to set up their own household. In this context, the notion of family is clearly concerned with the social unit created by the marriage of a man and a woman or by the tacit contract which serves as its substitute in the case of a consensual union.

They have chosen to organize their discussion around the stages of the life course: the period of family formation, that of its expansion, and finally that of its decline and disappearance.

In each of the chapters, the author carries out a detailed analysis of the differences between the sexes and of categories of individuals, at the same time furnishing explanations of the changes observed. There follows a conclusion bringing together the principal findings and present and future implications. All have avoided theories and judgements of personal, civil or moral values. They have kept to the facts and their significance.

Editor in chief

# **Chapter 1**

## **A PORTRAIT OF THE FAMILY LIFE OF YOUNG ADULTS**

**Zenaida R. Ravanera**

### **Introduction**

In societies like Canada, the transition from youth to adulthood generally takes place between the ages of 15 and 29. The media have nicknamed people who were aged 18 to 29 in the early 1990s as “twentysomething” or “generation X”. A popular notion about those who belong to this group is that they refuse to grow up: they delay getting married and clutter up the parental nest. This chapter presents a portrait of the family life of young adults using mainly census data. While data cannot determine whether young people are refusing to grow up, they do allow a close look at the family patterns of persons aged 15-29 in the 1990s and systematic comparisons with persons at the same age in the past.

The transition to adulthood does not usually happen through a single event (say, leaving the parental home or getting married) but in stages. As Modell and associates in 1976 note, “becoming an adult involves a series of changes in status which moves an individual from economic dependence upon their parents or their surrogates to economic independence (or dependence upon a spouse) and from participation in the family of orientation to establishment of a family of procreation...”. Modell and his colleagues focused on the following events: leaving school, joining the workforce, leaving the family of origin, marriage, and setting up a household, each giving rise to a transition from one situation to another.

One can attempt to understand the transition to adulthood by examining data on the characteristics routinely collected by the census, like schooling, work, types of living arrangement, marital status and parental status. It makes sense to study these changes of status in the sequence in which the majority of young people undergo them. Until recently, one sequence was typical: leaving school, entering the workforce, leaving the parental home, getting married, and having a first child. But recent trends in the lives of young adults have brought this typical sequence into question, quite apart from the fact that many other events associated with the transition to adulthood are not captured by the census. In particular, nothing is known of the marital history of people prior to the date of the census.

Availability of adequate census data becomes even more problematic when an analysis covers an extended period. Consistent historical data on marital

status can be obtained as far back as 1921, and data on parental status as far back as 1941, but data on living arrangements, school attendance and work status by age and sex are available only for more recent periods.

This portrait of the family life of young adults begins with the consideration of marital and parental statuses. The living arrangements of those in various marital statuses are described for the more recent period. School attendance and the work status of young adults are then considered in order to shed light on their changing patterns of family formation and living arrangements.

### **Marital Status: Family Formation among Young Adults**

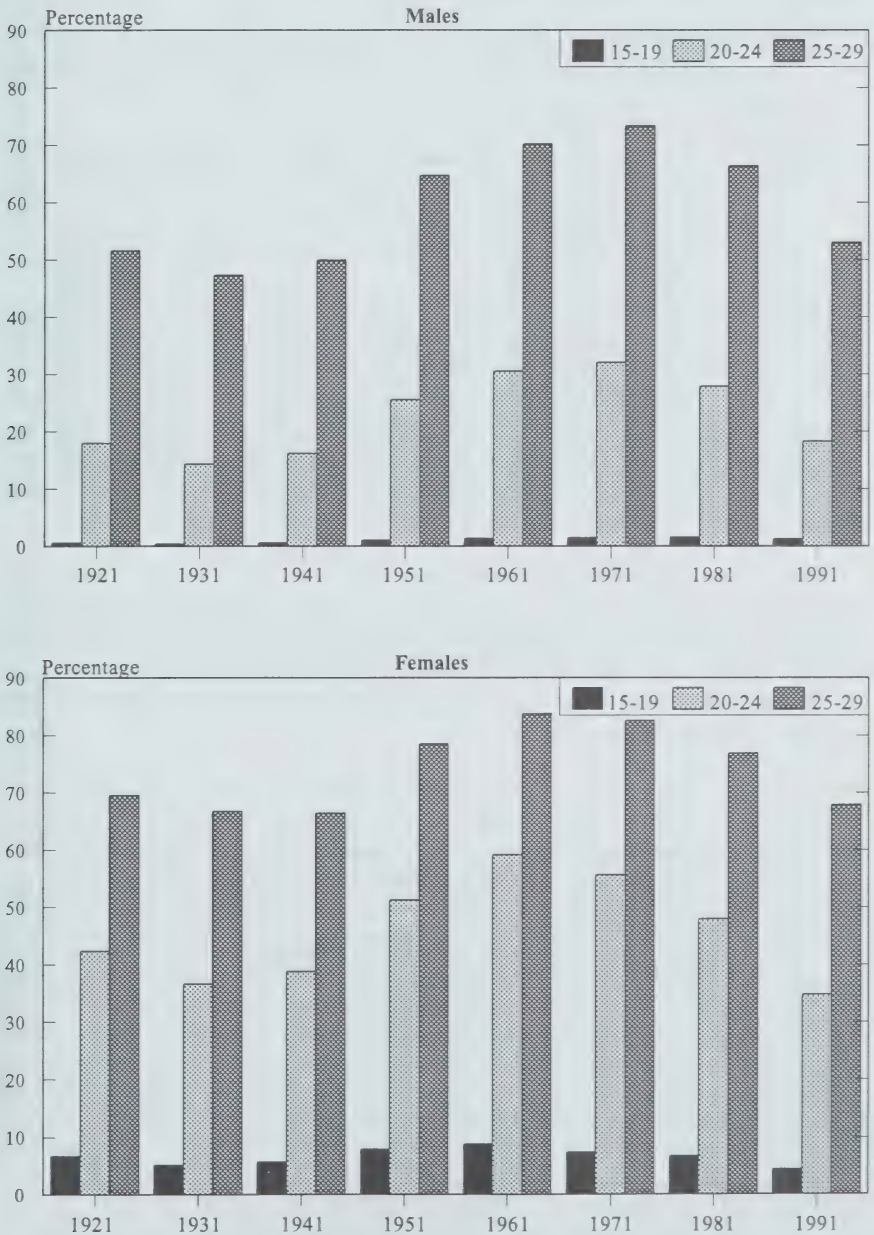
Traditionally, the event most commonly associated with the passage to adulthood has been the formation of one's own family, initiated by a legal marriage. While the formation of a couple is not essential to the concept of family, it is nonetheless the case that most families begin with the union of a man and a woman. For the most recent censuses, a distinction can be made between families which start with a legal union and those formed through common-law unions.

In all the censuses from 1921 to 1991, people are classified as never married, married, widowed, and divorced. The married will be the focus of discussion here, not only because of their role in family formation but also because the proportions of widowed and divorced are low among young adults. It is worth noting, however, that the proportion divorced has increased between 1921 and 1991, particularly among people in their late twenties. Among men aged 25-29, for example, the proportion increased from 0.1% in 1921 to 1.3% in 1991. The corresponding increase for women of the same age is from 0.1% to 2.4% (Appendix Table A1.1).

In this chapter, unless otherwise specified, the married category includes not only those who are legally married and living with their spouse, but also those who were legally married and have since separated, and those who are cohabiting, whatever their legal marital status. Figure 1.1 shows the percentage married from 1921 to 1991 among men and women aged 15-29 by five-year age groups. The most obvious changes are the decreases in percentage married, for men from a peak in 1971 and for women from a peak in 1961. The greatest decrease in percentage married occurred between 1981 and 1991; the 1991 figures (4% of women in their teens and 35% of women in their early twenties) are the lowest since 1921. While there are also significant declines for men, the proportions have not reached the lows recorded in 1931. Among men aged 25-29, for example, 53% were married in 1991, while the 1931 census counted 47%. At the same time, the 1991 census found only slightly over 1% of men in their teens and 18% of men in their early twenties who were married.



**Figure 1.1 Percentage Married in the Population Aged 15-29, by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921 to 1991**



Source: Table A1.1.

The downward trend in the percentage married seems to indicate that the young adults of the 1990s are reluctant to form their own families. However, it should be noted that:

- (1) the low percentage married in the 1990s is the continuation of a trend starting three decades ago among women and two decades ago among men;
- (2) for young men and women in their late twenties, the percentage married in the 1990s is not markedly lower than that observed in the first half of the century. The following text will show that the change is due mainly to a later formation of marital unions than in the past.

The change in the composition of the married category is more significant than the change in the percentage married. Although no figures are available from censuses for earlier years, data from other sources (the 1984 Family History Survey, for example) suggest that the married in censuses prior to 1971 were almost all legally married, while recently a significant fraction have been in common-law unions. Although the percentage married among young adults in 1991 is not very different from that observed earlier in the century, there is certainly a difference in the type of union.

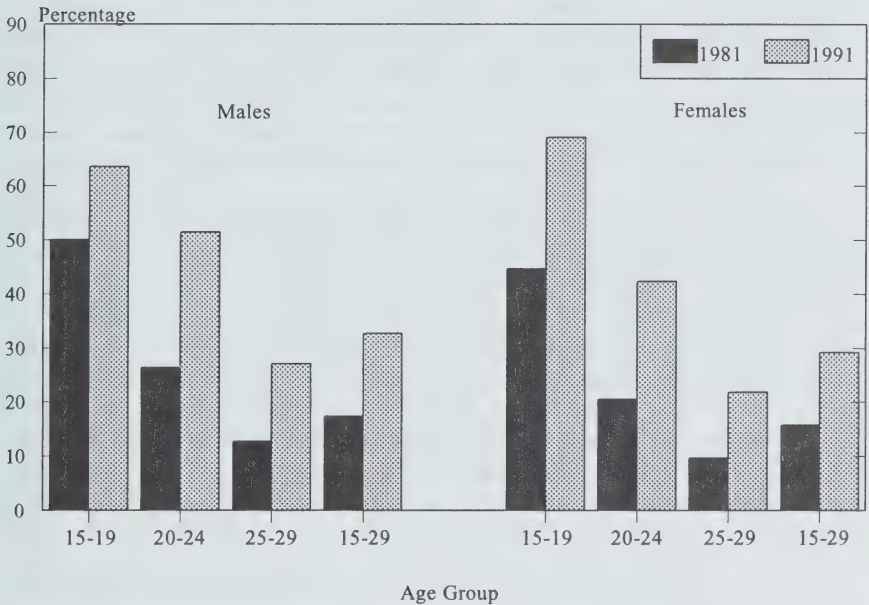
The increasing preference for cohabitation can be seen in Table 1.1. Married men and women in 1981 and 1991 are divided into three categories: those cohabiting, those legally married and living with their spouse, and the separated. While the total percentage married declined from 1981 to 1991, the decline was mainly among those legally married, particularly among people in their twenties.

**Table 1.1 Population Aged 15-29 Cohabiting, Legally Married and Separated by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent)**

Age Group	Males				Females			
	Cohabiting	Married	Separated	Total Married	Cohabiting	Married	Separated	Total Married
<b>1981</b>								
15-19	0.7	0.7	0.1	1.5	2.9	3.6	0.1	6.6
20-24	7.1	19.8	0.9	27.8	9.4	36.5	2.1	48.0
25-29	8.1	55.6	2.6	66.3	7.1	65.9	3.8	76.8
Total	5.2	24.5	1.2	30.9	6.5	35.0	2.0	43.4
<b>1991</b>								
15-19	0.7	0.5	0.1	1.2	2.9	1.3	0.1	4.3
20-24	9.1	8.7	0.4	18.2	14.2	19.4	1.2	34.8
25-29	13.9	37.6	1.5	53.0	14.2	50.9	2.7	67.8
Total	8.3	17.1	0.7	26.1	10.8	26.3	1.4	38.5

Source: 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Figure 1.2 Percentage Cohabiting among Those in a Union Aged 15-29 by Five-Year Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991**



**Sources:** 1981: Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-901 and 92-325, Tables 5 and 6.11 respectively.  
1991: Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-310, Tables 3 and 6. Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

Among men aged 20-24, for example, the percentage married decreased from 20% in 1981 to 9% in 1991, and among those aged 25-29, from 56% to 38%. Among women, the reduction was likewise significant: from 36% to 19% among those in their early twenties and from 66% to 51% among those in their late twenties. Thus, if families were formed only through legal unions, the 1991 census would show a significant reduction.

But families are formed increasingly through common-law unions, and the increase in this type of union between 1981 and 1991 is dramatic. Among those aged 25-29, the proportion cohabiting nearly doubled (from 8% in 1981 to 14% in 1991 among men and from 7% to 14% among women). The increase in cohabitation, however, is not enough to offset the decline in legal marriage.

The popularity of cohabitation can be seen in Figure 1.2, which shows cohabitation as a percentage of total unions. In 1981, a sixth of those aged 15-29 were cohabiting; in 1991, a third were doing so. Figure 1.2 also shows that, both in 1981 and in 1991, the younger the person, the more likely the



union will be cohabitation rather than marriage. Although it is rare for teenagers to be in a union, those who are are at least as likely to be cohabiting as married: about half in 1981 and two-thirds in 1991. In 1991, among those aged 20-24, 51% of men in a union and 42% of women in a union were cohabiting, approximately double the proportion in 1981. Finally, for those aged 25-29, about a quarter of those in a union in 1991 are cohabiting, twice the 1981 figure. These figures indicate that common-law unions have become an accepted household arrangement for a significant segment of young people.

There are certainly similarities between legal marriages and common-law unions. Among the similarities cited by Burch and Madan (1986:9), for example, are that "partners share domestic life in the same house or apartment; they are presumed to have a sexual relationship; in many contexts they function in society as a couple". But there are differences as well. Certainly some common-law unions are trial marriages. If they are more frequent among young adults than legal marriages, reliable sources indicate that many become legal marriages later. For example, data from the 1990 General Social Survey show that, among the married aged 18-29, 37% had previously cohabited. But by nature common-law unions are more easily dissolved than legal marriages. Wu and Balakrishnan in 1994, basing their estimate on the 1990 General Social Survey, find that about three-quarters of common-law unions have ended within five years, with about 40% ending in marriage. By comparison, among married people aged 18-29, Burch and Madan, on the basis of data from the 1984 Family History Survey, calculate the probability of the break-up of a legal marriage within five years as 14% for men and 11% for women.

Two points need to be mentioned to put these findings on the temporary nature of common-law unions in perspective. First, not all common-law unions are dissolved quickly. Burch and Madan in 1986, for example, estimated that about 20% of women and 13% of men in a common-law union were still in it 10 years later. The corresponding estimates of Wu and Balakrishnan in 1994, using data from the 1990 General Social Survey, were 12% for women and 15% for men. Further, while common-law unions are more likely to be dissolved than legal marriages, the fact that the latter are by no means permanent is revealed by a rising divorce rate among young adults. The divorce rate of men under 25, which was 6 per 1,000 in 1971, increased to 13 per 1,000 in 1986; for women of the same age, at 15 per 1,000 in 1986, the rate was more than twice as high as in 1971, according to Ram in 1990.

The increasing prevalence of common-law unions is not confined to Canada. Many Western countries, for example, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark and France, are experiencing a similar phenomenon. According to Boulanger and associates in 1994, for people aged 20 to 24, the proportion in common-law unions was 44% in Sweden and 45% in Denmark in 1981; in 1985, it was 19% in France and 16% in the Netherlands.

In short, young adults in the past had only the one route of legal marriage to start a family, while those of the 1990s have the alternative of a common-law union. They may in retrospect find that it was a trial marriage, but they may be deliberately choosing a form of marital relationship that excludes the legal institution of marriage. However, studies by Balakrishnan and associates in 1987 and by Burch and Madan in 1986 already show that these alternative forms of family formation are not without consequences, for example, a higher risk of divorce among marriages preceded by cohabitation. Data from the 1984 Family History Survey show a divorce rate of 17% after 10 years for marriages preceded by cohabitation compared to 10% for others. Childbearing is also affected since cohabiting couples have fewer children than the legally married. Beaujot, using data from the same survey, has shown that women aged 25-29 had an average of 0.21 children if they were single, 0.54 if they had never legally married but were cohabiting, and 1.38 if they were legally married. This is not particularly surprising; persons who enter a consensual union to be free of constraints would often want to remain childless for the same reason. Future research on the stability and well-being of families will need to take into account the first experiences of family formation among young adults.

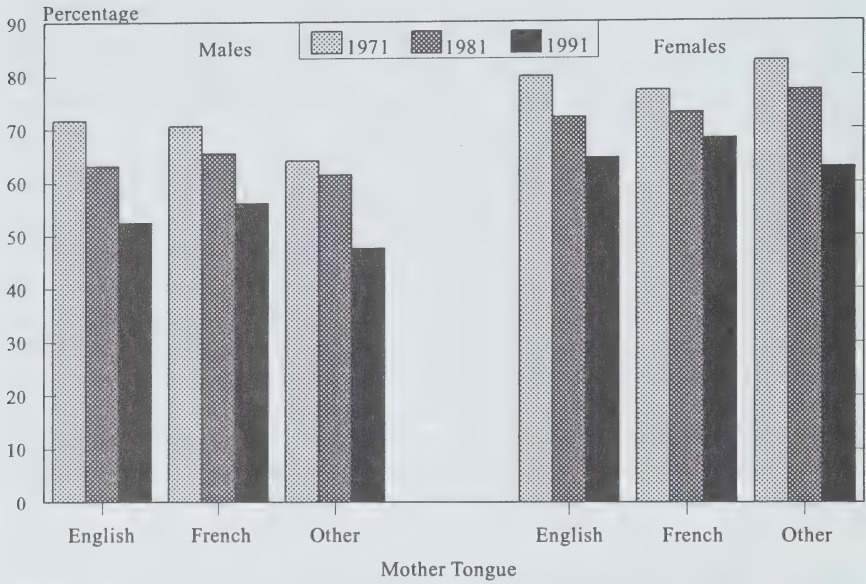
### **Cultural and Socio-Economic Differentials in Marital Status**

The formation of a family is an event affected by many factors, not only the characteristics of the individuals themselves but of their families of origin and of their economic and cultural environment. Census data provide only a limited glimpse of these factors. At the same time, it is useful to examine the percentage married by mother tongue and educational attainment. Those aged 25-29 are examined because they show more variation in levels of education than younger people.

Figure 1.3A shows that the percentage married of those aged 25-29 decreased between 1971 and 1991 regardless of mother tongue, but that the magnitude varied. Those with French mother tongue experienced the smallest decrease, 14 percentage points among men and 9 percentage points among women, so that by 1991 they had the highest percentage in a union.

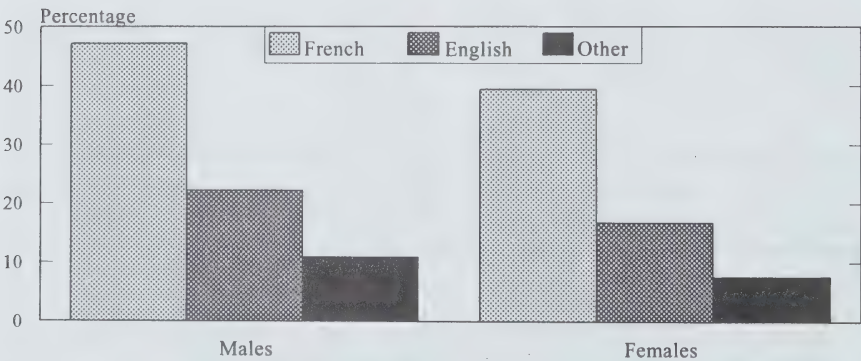
However, as can be seen in Figure 1.3B, a high proportion of the couples with French mother tongue were in common-law unions: 47% of men and 39% of women, while the corresponding percentages for those of English mother tongue were not even half as large, 22% of men and 17% of women. Cohabitation was lower still among those with a mother tongue other than French or English: 11% and 8% respectively. The 1984 Canadian Fertility Survey found a similar trend in cohabitation by mother tongue. An obvious conclusion is that there are cultural differences in union formation.

**Figure 1.3A Percentage Married in the Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1971 to 1991**



Source: Table A1.2.

**Figure 1.3B Percentage Cohabiting in the Married Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1991**

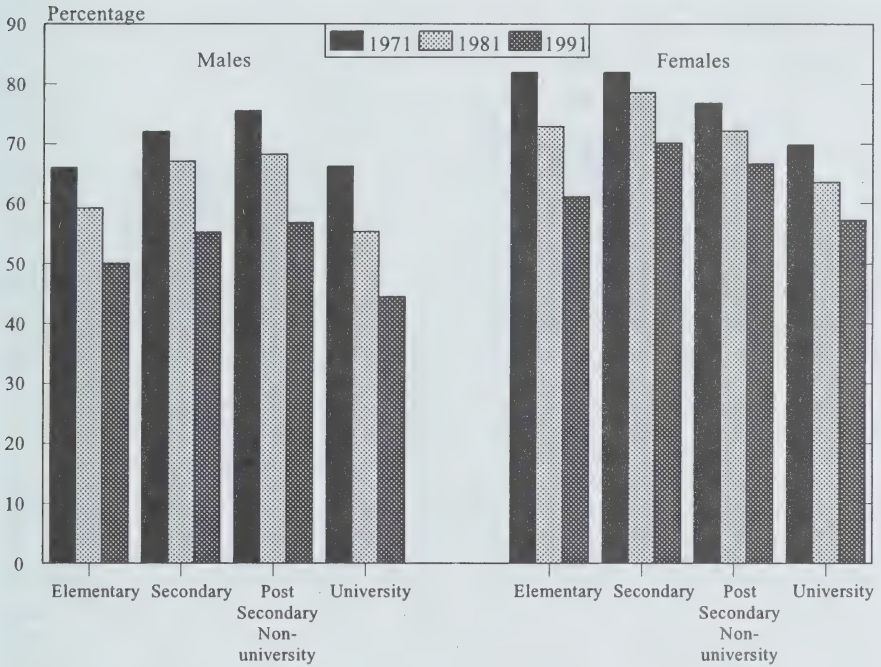


Source: Table A1.3.

To measure the effect of socio-economic differentials, Figure 1.4A shows the percentage in a marital union by educational attainment in 1971, 1981 and 1991. Between 1971 and 1991, the percentage married declined at all levels of education for both men and women. In general, those with secondary



**Figure 1.4A Percentage Married in the Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1971-1991**

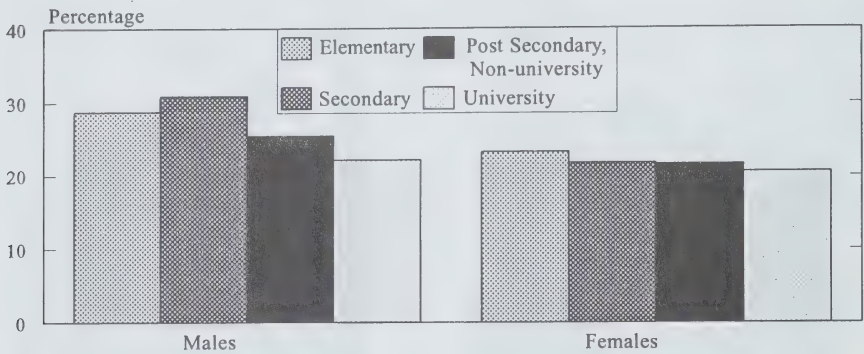


Source: Table A1.2.

and post secondary non-university education have a higher percentage than those with elementary education, and those with university education have the lowest. In 1991, among men aged 25-29, some 55% of those with secondary or post secondary non-university education were married while the corresponding figures for those with elementary and university education were 50% and 44% respectively. There may be different reasons for the low percentage married at the two extreme ends of educational attainment. It could be that, as Burch notes in 1990, those with low education have more difficulty in finding partners, while those with university education may simply postpone getting married until after completing their education and finding stable employment.

Although no data were available, it was widely believed in the past that common-law unions were associated with lower socio-economic strata while “‘respectable’ people were properly married”, as Burch says in 1990. However, the same author found the opposite in the 1986 census. Figure 1.4B shows the percentage cohabiting among those aged 25-29 in a union. For men, with the exception of those with only an elementary education, those

**Figure 1.4B Percentage Cohabiting in the Married Population Aged 25-29 by Sex and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991**



Source: Table A1.3.

with higher levels of education have lower proportions cohabiting. For women, there is little difference in the proportion cohabiting at different levels of education, except for a slightly lower proportion among those with the highest level of education. Despite the finding of a lower level of cohabitation among those with university education, especially among men, the levels of 22% for men and 20% for women do not support the assumption, formerly widespread, that common-law unions are restricted mainly to those in the lower social strata.

### **Parental Status: Childbearing in Early Adult Life**

Becoming a parent is a major transition. The 1984 Canadian Fertility Survey has shown that women aged 18-29 consider children an “irreplaceable source of affection”, but believe that they bring heavy responsibilities; having children can mean postponing or foregoing their educational or career goals. A study by Grindstaff and associates in 1989, using 1981 census data, found that women ever married who are childless, or who postpone births until after age 30, are more likely to be highly educated and have professional careers. If the relationship is a causal one and if a career has become even more important for the young adults of the 1990s, then the proportion of women among the “twentysomethings” with at least one child should decline still further.

Among young adults, the average number of children may not be as important as whether they have had a child. If low fertility is the norm, the desired number of children can be achieved even if childbearing starts at a later age. Besides, the higher-order births of those under age 30 contribute

**Figure 1.5 Percentage with at Least One Child among Ever-Married Women Aged 15-29 by Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1941 to 1991**



**Source:** Table A1.4.

a relatively small share of children ever born, and this has been the case for several decades. For instance, Ram in 1990 found that third-order births to persons under 30 accounted for only 17% to 18% of all such births during the baby boom, and about 14% during both the Great Depression and the baby bust.

Figure 1.5, which presents for the period 1941 to 1991 the percentage of women ever married (including those in common-law unions) aged 15-29 with at least one child, makes it evident that young women in the 1990s are reluctant to become mothers, even more so than the young women of the 1980s. Even though 31% of teenage women ever married have had at least one child in 1991, this has not stopped declining since the baby boom (58% in 1961) and is also lower than in 1941 when it was 44%. The same decline is visible for women in their twenties ever married, where 41% of those 20-24 and 62% of those 25-29 have had children in 1991. This decline has been occurring over the last three decades, and has been sharpest at ages 15-19 and 20-24. The more modest decline among those aged 25-29 reflects the



**Table 1.2 Percentage with at Least One Child among Women Aged 15-29, by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991**

Marital Status	Age Group			
	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-29
Never Married	2.4	8.9	16.0	7.2
Cohabiting	26.6	28.3	41.1	34.6
Married	39.5	48.4	67.0	54.2
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	43.5	66.8	70.2	68.8
Ever-married Women	31.3	41.2	62.0	55.2
All Women	3.7	20.3	48.4	26.2

Source: 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-321, Tables 2 and 3.

postponement of childbearing in the younger age groups. Thus, with a relatively low proportion of young married women becoming mothers, the overall picture of childbearing among young adults is a continuing baby bust, albeit at a slower pace of decline in the 1990s.

A recent major trend in fertility patterns is the uncoupling of marriage and fertility. While there has always been childbearing outside marriage, the concept of illegitimacy implied

society's severe disapproval. The increasing acceptance of cohabitation implies the disappearance of the concept of illegitimacy.

Table 1.2 tabulates the percentage of women with at least one child by their marital status in the 1991 census. About 7% of women aged 15-29 who had never been legally married and were not cohabiting at the time of the census have had their first child, while the proportion is highest, 16%, in the oldest age group. Although these women were not in a marital union at the time of the census, many of the births probably occurred within previous common-law relationships.

Of the women aged 15-29 who were in a union, about 35% of those cohabiting and 54% of those legally married have had a child; and of those who were at one time married but were no longer so at the time of the census (the separated, widowed and divorced), about 69% have had a child. As in the case of the never married, the percentage of parents among these ever-married women was higher at older ages.

The difference in the percentage of women who are mothers between those in common-law unions and in legal marriages is most likely due to the greater instability of common-law unions. Women who are cohabiting may be less willing to take on the responsibility of raising children, particularly if they consider the union a trial marriage. It may also be that they attach a different value to children than those who are legally married.

As for the higher percentage of mothers among those who were formerly married (the separated, widowed or divorced), the most likely explanation is the existence of previous marriages entered into at young ages that exposed them longer to the possibility of having children; it may also be that these marriages, now broken, were the precipitate result of a pregnancy. Whatever

the cause, these women are in a difficult position, having no partner to help them cope. Two-thirds of women under 30, who were legally married but no longer are, have children.

In summary, the young adults of the 1990s, compared to those of the past:

- (1) are more reluctant to have children; and
- (2) among those who have become parents, many became so outside a legal marriage.

If the childbearing patterns of older women can serve as an indication, many of the young women who have not had children in their twenties will probably have their first when they reach their thirties. For instance, Grindstaff and associates in 1989 found that, among those ever married, 45% of women with no child at age 30 in 1976 had had at least one child by age 35 in 1981.

Available evidence regarding childbearing intentions supports this proposition. Table 1.3 shows the intended number of children for men and women aged 15-29 based on the 1990 General Social Survey. Fewer than 10% of both men and women said that they intend to have no children; about half intend to have two; and a little more than a quarter would like to have three children. McDaniel in 1994 sees this as "suggesting no disenchantment with family or children". However, it is difficult to predict the proportion who will fulfil their intentions. No doubt many will do so partly because the desired number of children is low. That is, even with marital unions at later ages, having two children is largely feasible. However, some will probably not achieve their intended number of children. For instance, among women aged 25-29, only about 7% intend to remain childless while 52% have no children as of the 1991 census (Tables 1.2 and 1.3). In general, the late entry into a marital union, the increasing preference for cohabitation, rising marital disruption through divorce, and increasing biological sterility with age are some of the obstacles to the achievement of their fertility goals. As they get older, many of these young adults will most likely adjust downward the number of children they intend to have.

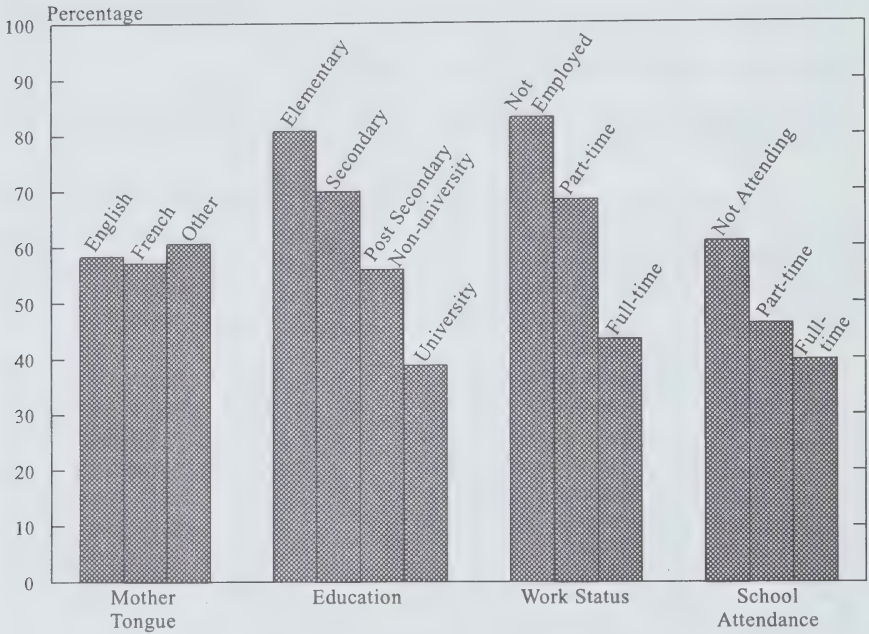
**Table 1.3 Distribution (in Percent) of the Intended Number of Children in the Population Aged 15-29, by Five-Year Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1990**

Age Group	Intended Number of Children				
	None	1	2	3	4 +
<b>Males</b>					
15-19	4.9	4.6	55.0	27.3	8.2
20-24	5.5	3.5	58.0	23.3	9.6
25-29	7.4	6.4	44.8	28.0	13.4
15-29	6.0	4.9	52.2	26.3	10.6
<b>Females</b>					
15-19	6.0	3.8	49.0	28.5	12.8
20-24	7.3	6.0	46.3	29.7	10.8
25-29	7.2	7.9	48.5	27.3	9.1
15-29	6.8	6.0	47.9	28.4	10.7

**Note:** Intended number includes children respondents already have. Table excludes respondents whose answers were 'don't know' or number 'not stated'.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

**Figure 1.6 Percentage with at Least One Child Among Ever-Married Women Aged 25-29 by Mother Tongue, Educational Attainment, Work Status and School Attendance, Canada, 1991**



Source: Public Use Microdata File, 1991 Census of Canada.

### Cultural and Socio-Economic Differentials in Parental Status

An analysis of data from the 1984 Canadian Fertility Survey leads to the conclusion that, over the last two decades, the effect of ascribed socio-cultural characteristics such as religion and ethnicity has diminished. At the same time, achieved factors such as education, labour-force participation and place of residence have gained considerable influence on fertility. For example, Balakrishnan and associates in 1993 note that, among women aged 18-29 in 1984, the average number of children among Catholics (1.15) was not much different than that among Protestants (1.12) or those with no religion (1.02). In contrast, the difference by level of education was large: those with fewer than 9 years of schooling had 1.46 children while those with some university education had only 0.95 children.

Estimates of the percentage of childless women among those aged 15-29 who have ever been married or in a common-law union from the 1971, 1981 and 1991 censuses present a similar picture. Over the past three decades differences are observed in the percentage childless by mother tongue, but



these are slight when compared to variations by educational attainment. Differences by work status and school attendance are also larger than those by mother tongue (Appendix Table A1.5). These differences are especially easy to analyse for women aged 25-29. Figure 1.6 shows the percentages with at least one child among those aged 25-29 in 1991 who have ever been married. This figure reveals that there is hardly any difference in parental status among the three categories of mother tongue. In contrast, the difference between those with elementary education and those with university education is 45 percentage points. Among those who have full-time employment, only 47% have had at least one child, while among those not employed about 90% have had a child, a difference of about 43 percentage points. School attendance also reduces the likelihood of becoming a parent. The percentage with children among those ever married attending school, whether full time or part time, is considerably lower (by 23 and 16 percentage points respectively) than among those not attending school.

It seems obvious that young women often find educational and work activities to be incompatible with having a child. It is also probable that young women who go on to gain higher education or to achieve career goals develop different values than others. For these women, childbearing may rank lower as a priority compared to acquiring an education or having a successful career. Regardless of the various explanations offered for the differentials, one thing seems clear: the strong links of fertility to education and work imply that fertility among young adults will continue to be low, especially as the trend toward the increasing involvement of women in education and work continues into the 1990s.

In sum, the trend in childbearing appears to be similar to the trend in marriage: among women, the percentages peaked in 1961 and declined thereafter. Thus, since the 1970s young women have become increasingly slow to form a partnership, and those who have entered a marital union are increasingly slow to bear children. Since many young adults have not advanced to the stage of forming their own families, the following sections on living arrangements, school attendance and work status will consider their other preoccupations.

## **Living Arrangements of Young Adults**

Between 1971 and 1991, a marked increase in living alone has been observed, particularly among young adults and older women. Dumas in 1992 has shown that, when the data are normalized to remove the effects of age and marital status, this increase has occurred in all categories of marital status. According to Wargon in 1978, Beaujot in 1977 and Harrison in 1981, this trend is due to the desire for independence and privacy, facilitated by higher incomes and by the availability of affordable housing.

**Table 1.4 Percentage Living Alone in the Population Aged 15-24 by Sex, Canada, 1961 to 1991**

Sex	1961	1971	1981	1991
Males	0.7	0.6	4.3	3.3
Females	1.7	1.8	4.4	3.4

Sources: Harrison, Brian (1981). *Living Alone in Canada*, Catalogue No. 98-811, Statistics Canada, Ottawa. Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

Table 1.4 confirms the significant increase between 1971 and 1981 in the percentage living alone among those aged 15-24. Among women, for example, about 2% were living alone in 1971 but the percentage doubled to 4% by 1981. By the mid-1980s, however, a counter-trend, referred to metaphorically as the cluttered nest, seems to have emerged: young adults were staying longer with their parents, and some of those who had left subsequently returned home. This phenomenon was noted by Boyd and Pryor in 1989, and for the United States by DaVanzo and Goldscheider in 1990, Glick and Lin in 1986 and by Heer and associates in 1985. Table 1.4 shows, for example, that the percentage living alone among both men and women, which was around 4% in 1981, went down to 3% by 1991. Aggregate figures cannot portray the extent of changes in living arrangements. Among young adults, these arrangements depend greatly on their marital status.

The 1981 and 1991 censuses provide detailed data on living arrangements. The concept of census family is basic to understanding the subject. For Statistics Canada, the census family comprises a husband and wife, with or without never-married children regardless of age, or a lone parent with one or more never-married children, living together in the same dwelling. According to this definition, a son or daughter living in the parental home who is 29 years old and has never been married is still a part of their parents' census family whereas a divorced son or daughter aged 19 is no longer part of the census family even when living with parents. In the latter case, they are considered to be living with relatives.

The following discussion of living arrangements focuses on young adults aged 15-24 who have never been married, rather than on the married population, although some attention is also paid to those previously married. Married people (including those in common-law unions) are not examined because they are almost all a spouse or partner in a census family.

### **Living Arrangements of Never-Married Young Adults**

The cluttered-nest phenomenon has been observed since the mid-1980s, suggesting that there will be more sons and daughters aged 15-29 living in

the parental home in 1991 than in 1981. On the whole, the data do not confirm the hypothesis (Table 1.5). However, a breakdown by age group tells a somewhat different story because the structure of the never-married population has changed between 1981 and 1991, partly due to young adults' delay in marrying during the 1990s.

In each group, the percentage of young adults living with their parents has increased between 1981 and 1991. In terms of three-year age groups, the largest increase was among women never married aged 24-26: 38% were living with their parents in 1981 and 46% in 1991. The complementary trend is that lower percentages are living alone in each age group in 1991 than in 1981. In the same group, for example, 30% were living alone in 1981

**Table 1.5 Distribution (in Percent) of the Living Arrangements of Never-Married Population Aged 15-29 by Three-Year Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991**

	Age Group					
	15-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	15-29
<b>1981</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
Child in Husband and Wife Families	81.3	71.3	56.5	40.5	28.0	64.2
Child in Lone Parent Families	14.4	13.9	12.3	11.1	11.0	13.1
Lone Parent	-	-	-	0.2	0.2	0.1
Living with Relatives	2.0	4.7	6.5	7.3	7.3	4.8
Living with Non-relatives	2.1	7.0	14.2	19.4	20.1	9.6
Living Alone	0.2	3.1	10.5	21.5	33.3	8.3
<b>Females</b>						
Child in Husband and Wife Families	80.8	68.8	49.1	29.0	18.8	62.6
Child in Lone Parent Families	14.4	12.7	10.9	9.3	10.2	12.5
Lone Parent	0.1	1.3	3.5	6.3	8.7	2.2
Living with Relatives	2.1	4.5	6.8	6.9	8.3	4.5
Living with Non-relatives	2.3	8.1	15.0	18.5	14.6	8.8
Living Alone	0.2	4.6	14.6	30.1	39.3	9.4
<b>1991</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
Child in Husband and Wife Families	79.6	71.9	58.7	42.3	29.9	61.0
Child in Lone Parent Families	16.5	15.0	13.1	11.9	11.5	14.0
Lone Parent	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.2
Living with Relatives	1.7	3.9	6.0	7.4	8.5	4.9
Living with Non-relatives	2.0	7.1	15.3	22.4	23.2	12.0
Living Alone	0.1	2.0	7.3	15.8	26.4	7.9
<b>Females</b>						
Child in Husband and Wife Families	78.9	68.3	53.0	36.4	22.9	59.3
Child in Lone Parent Families	16.6	13.4	11.6	10.0	9.4	13.3
Lone Parent	0.2	2.4	5.2	9.1	12.9	4.3
Living with Relatives	1.7	3.7	5.4	6.4	7.1	4.2
Living with Non-relatives	2.4	8.4	16.0	20.4	21.4	11.2
Living Alone	0.2	2.9	8.7	17.7	26.4	7.7

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Table 1.6 Distribution (in Percent) of the Living Arrangements of Previously Married People in the Two Specific Age Groups 24-26 and 27-29, by Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991**

Living Arrangements	Males				Females			
	1981		1991		1981		1991	
	24-26	27-29	24-26	27-29	24-26	27-29	24-26	27-29
Lone Parent	9.2	8.0	9.2	10.4	51.8	60.7	61.2	64.4
Living with Relatives	35.9	26.1	37.4	28.3	14.5	8.9	14.7	10.3
Living with Non-relatives	20.8	22.2	28.9	27.0	10.0	8.7	10.2	10.2
Living Alone	34.0	43.6	24.5	34.0	23.6	21.6	13.9	15.0

Source: Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

but by 1991 this had dropped to 18%. A similar trend holds for all three-year age groups, although the magnitude of decline differs. It is worth noting that the declining tendency to live alone is peculiar to the younger age groups. For the whole of the population never married, Dumas in 1992 has noted an increase since 1981 in the proportion of persons living alone.

These trends in living arrangements probably do not indicate that the preference for privacy has changed. It is more likely that, if they live longer with parents, it is because they lack the resources to live independently. The increase in the proportion of young adults living with non-relatives is probably due to the same cause. Thus, among women never married aged 27-29, 15% were living with non-relatives in 1981 but 21% in 1991.

Although the trends are similar for women and men, there are differences between them nevertheless. In both 1981 and 1991, for example, the percentage of young men living with parents is higher than that of young women, particularly in older age groups. However, the biggest difference between the sexes is in the percentage who are lone parents. In both 1981 and 1991, among men aged 27-29 who have never been legally married, fewer than 1% were lone parents. In contrast, 9% of women never married and of the same age were lone parents in 1981 and 13% in 1991.

### **Living Arrangements of Previously-Married Young Adults**

Few persons aged 15-29 have been previously married, that is, classified by the census as separated, divorced or widowed. Nonetheless, the proportion divorced in the age group 25-29 amounts to 2% to 3%. This group is the object of the following analysis.

Table 1.6 shows the living arrangements of the previously married among those aged 24-26 and 27-29 in 1981 and 1991. The difference between the sexes is more pronounced than among the never married; the most important is the much higher percentage of lone parents among women than among men. Among those aged 27-29, for example, only 8% of men were lone



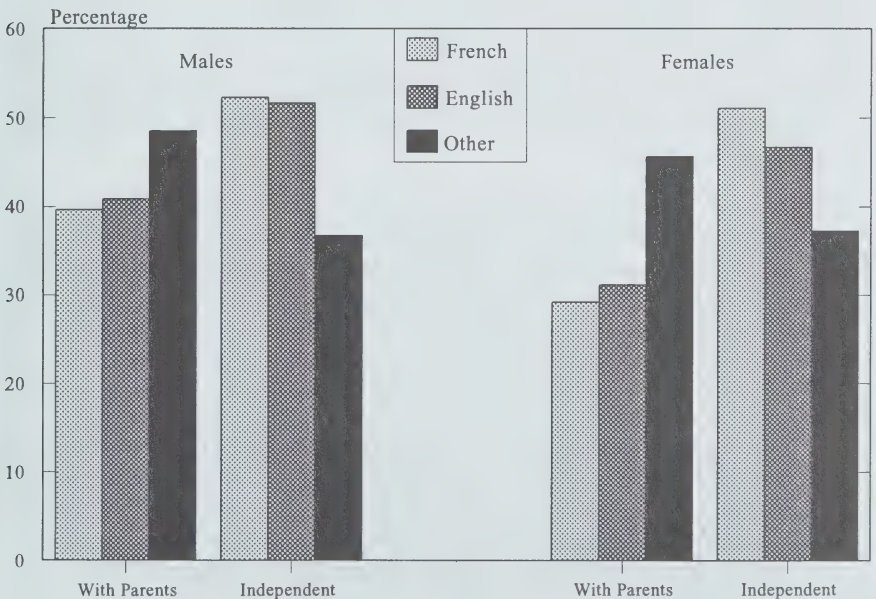
parents in 1981 compared to 61% of women. This percentage increased slightly to 10% for men and 64% for women in 1991. A good number of people who have been married have children, and the consequences are much more important for the living arrangements of women than of men.

The predominant living arrangement among previously-married women is heading a lone-parent family. For previously-married men, the older ones (aged 27-29) tend to live alone, whereas those who are younger (24-26) tend to live with their parents or other relatives. In both age groups, the percentage of men living alone decreased between 1981 and 1991, while the percentage living with non-relatives increased. Once again, this may be an indication that living independently is the preferred living arrangement but that those who lack the necessary resources may instead live with non-relatives.

### Cultural and Socio-Economic Differentials in Living Arrangements

Like getting married or having children, living arrangements and the associated process of leaving the parental home are affected by various socio-economic and cultural factors. The relevant factors include the economic

**Figure 1.7 Percentage Living with Parents and Living Independently in the Never-Married Population Aged 27-29 by Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1991**



**Note:** 'With parents' includes children in husband-wife families and in lone parent families. 'Independent' includes living alone and living with non-relatives.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata File, 1991 Census of Canada.

**Table 1.7 Distribution (in Percent) of the Living Arrangements of the Previously Married Population Aged 27-29 by Sex, Mother Tongue and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991**

	Living Arrangements							
	Lone Parent	Living with Relatives	Living with Non-relatives	Living Alone	Lone Parent	Living with Relatives	Living with Non-relatives	Living Alone
	Males				Females			
English French Other All	Mother Tongue							
	9.9	27.3	27.9	34.9	66.5	8.9	10.0	14.6
	12.6	23.4	23.4	40.5	60.0	12.1	9.8	18.1
	9.6	39.4	26.6	24.5	58.2	15.9	12.4	13.5
	10.3	28.3	27.0	34.4	64.4	10.3	10.2	15.0
Elementary Secondary Post secondary Non-university University All	Educational Attainment							
	15.9	43.2	20.5	20.5	71.2	15.4	5.8	7.7
	13.1	30.1	27.1	29.8	72.1	9.6	8.6	9.7
	8.1	25.8	22.7	43.4	63.6	10.3	10.1	16.4
	4.5	21.6	36.9	36.9	42.6	11.3	16.7	29.4
	10.3	28.3	27.0	34.4	64.4	10.3	10.2	15.0

Source: Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

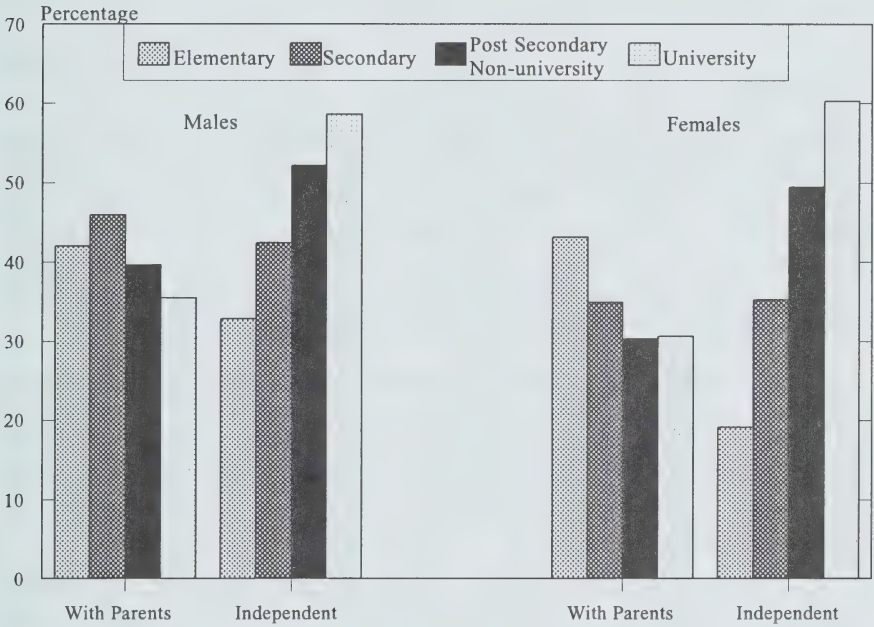
background of the family, the religion or religiosity of parents and children, family types, and opportunities for schooling and work. More on this subject can be found in Young in 1987, Mitchell and associates in 1989, Goldscheider and Goldscheider in 1994, and Zhao and associates, forthcoming. This study is restricted to variations in living arrangements by mother tongue and educational attainment.

In the 27-29 age group (Figure 1.7), the living arrangements of the never married among those of English and French mother tongue do not differ very much. What stands out is the distinctive living arrangements of persons with a mother tongue other than English or French. This group, internally quite varied, is more likely to be living with parents and less likely to be living independently. For women, the proportion of lone parents is also low in this group.

A similar association between mother tongue and living arrangements seems to exist for the previously married. Table 1.7 shows that living with relatives (most likely their parents) is highest among those with a mother tongue other than English or French. Men with a mother tongue other than English or French are least prone to be living alone and women least likely to be lone parents.

These findings may point to more traditional values regarding living arrangements for persons with a mother tongue other than French or English.

**Figure 1.8 Percentage Living with Parents and Living Independently in the Never-Married Population Aged 27-29 by Sex and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991**



**Note:** 'With parents' includes children in husband-wife families and in lone parent families. 'Independent' includes living alone and living with non-relatives.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1991 Census of Canada.

It could be that the desire for independence and privacy is not as widespread, or that norms surrounding home-leaving are stricter. It may also be more acceptable for formerly married children to live with their parents.

Figure 1.8 shows a clear relationship between educational attainment and living arrangements. Among single men and women aged 27-29 in 1991, the higher the education, the lower the percentage living with parents. As well, those with higher education have higher proportions living independently, either living alone or living with non-relatives.

This association between education and living arrangements is also seen among the previously married. Table 1.7 shows that, among previously married men and women, the higher the educational attainment the lower is the proportion living with relatives, the higher is the proportion living independently (alone or with non-relatives) and the lower is the proportion who are lone parents.



This association between education and living arrangements can be interpreted within the context of preferences for independence and privacy. It would appear that, whenever resources allow, young adults prefer to live independently.

## **Discussion**

Census data on marital and parental status reveal that young adults are generally delaying their entry into a marital relationship and parenthood. Those who have not formed their own family adopt various types of living arrangement. As expected, the younger the individual, the more likely it is that they are living with their parents. Clearly, the cluttered nest is more prevalent in 1991 than in 1981. A large proportion of the older cohorts among young adults are living independently, but fewer in 1991 than in 1981.

These trends suggest a certain ambivalence between living with parents and living completely independently, because there is also an increase in another form of independent living, that of living with non-relatives. Also, the higher the socio-economic status, the greater the proportion living independently, which implies that the older among young adults opt for independence and privacy whenever resources allow.

The reasons young adults give for leaving the parental home can illuminate their desire for privacy and independence. The question was asked by the 1990 General Social Survey. Among men aged 25-29, the reason cited most often is "to be independent or to move into own place", by 34%, while "to get married", the second commonest reason, was given by only 24%. Among women of the same age, "marriage" was the reason cited most often (34%), while "independence" was cited by another 32% (Ravanera et al., 1993).

An explanation of the opposing trend toward the prolonging of living with parents may be that parents are putting fewer constraints on their young adult children, who consequently have more independence even while living with them. Bibby and Posterski in 1985 suggest that the values of parents and children have become more alike. If the generation gap has narrowed, living with parents would pose the current generation of young adults fewer problems.

## **School Attendance, Work Status and Income of Young Adults**

Leaving school, entering the workforce and forming a family are experienced in a sequence that can vary. For many, leaving school and entering the labour force occur at the same time as other events, such as living on one's own or forming a marital union. Some young adults may consider finishing school and having a secure job to be prerequisites to forming a family.

In the following paragraphs, it is assumed that school attendance, work status and income are related to the family formation and living arrangements of young adults, but no causal relationships are implied.

### School Attendance

Table 1.8 gives the percentage of young adults who were full-time students in 1981 and 1991. Statistics Canada defines someone as a full-time student if they are taking 75% or more of the normal course load in the grade or year in which they are registered. Courses of six weeks or less taken during

**Table 1.8 Percentage of Full-Time Students in the Population Aged 15-29, by Three-Year Age Group, Marital Status and Sex, Canada, 1981 and 1991**

	Age Group					
	15-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	15-29
<b>Never Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1981	78.0	43.1	35.1	11.9	7.7	43.1
1991	88.2	60.2	36.5	17.5	9.0	49.0
<b>Females</b>						
1981	80.1	48.9	26.1	10.7	6.3	49.4
1991	89.7	68.0	42.8	17.6	9.3	56.2
<b>Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1981	41.8	13.2	8.2	5.9	3.5	5.7
1991	--	21.4	12.6	6.8	4.8	7.0
<b>Females</b>						
1981	23.2	7.9	5.5	2.7	1.9	3.7
1991	48.4	21.8	11.4	5.5	3.4	6.7
<b>Previously Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1981	--	-	7.5	6.8	4.1	9.2
1991	--	--	17.0	10.2	6.4	10.1
<b>Females</b>						
1981	--	--	8.2	6.2	5.8	6.7
1991	--	--	15.8	13.6	10.8	13.2
<b>Total</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1981	77.8	41.4	20.3	8.6	4.7	31.2
1991	88.1	58.7	32.2	13.2	6.4	37.7
<b>Females</b>						
1981	79.1	41.1	15.8	5.1	2.9	28.9
1991	89.1	62.5	31.7	10.6	5.3	36.7

Source: Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

the day are considered to be part-time attendance. The general trend involves an increase in school attendance between 1981 and 1991. For example, among women aged 15-29, whatever their marital status, 29% were full-time students in 1981 and 37% in 1991.

Comparisons by gender show that men have a higher percentage of full-time school attendance than women, while the increase was greater for women. The gender gap in attendance has consequently narrowed in most age groups.

As might be expected, it is among the never married that the percentage of full-time students is highest and among the currently married that it is lowest. In each marital status, the increase in full-time attendance among women is higher than that of men. As a result, in 1991 the proportion of previously-married women who are full-time students (13%) is greater than the proportion of men (10%).

## Work Status

Employment among young adults varies greatly by gender, with men having a higher labour force participation rate (Table 1.9). But women are fast catching up: their rate has increased steadily from 1951, when 47% of women aged 20-24 were in the labour force, to 1991, when 82% were. The rate for men has fluctuated between 92% and 86% over this period.

The effect of the recession in the early 1990s on young adults is reflected in the unemployment rate, which was generally higher in 1991 than in 1981

**Table 1.9 Labour Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rate by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1951 to 1991**

Year	Males			Females		
	15-19	20-24	25-34	15-19	20-24	25-34
<b>Labour Force Participation Rate</b>						
1951	58.6	92.4	96.4	37.8	46.9	24.2
1961	41.4	87.2	94.1	34.2	49.5	29.6
1971	46.6	86.5	92.6	37.0	62.8	44.5
1981	55.0	91.4	95.2	51.1	78.0	66.0
1991	56.3	89.0	93.9	54.2	81.8	78.7
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>						
1971	21.9	11.3	5.3	23.8	9.7	6.9
1981	27.1	14.3	7.2	28.7	14.0	9.5
1991	27.7	20.1	12.7	26.8	16.8	12.3

Sources: 1951 and 1961: 1971 Census of Canada, Bulletin 3.1-2, Table 2. 1971, 1981 and 1991: 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-324, Table 3.



**Table 1.10 Percentage Employed Full Time in the Population Aged 15-29, By Age Group, Marital Status and Sex, Canada, 1970, 1980 and 1990**

	Age Group					
	15-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	15-29
<b>Never Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	2.4	16.6	39.7	54.6	62.3	22.3
1980	1.4	20.2	41.7	54.8	60.5	26.5
1990	1.5	14.2	34.1	51.6	60.5	17.1
<b>Females</b>						
1970	1.8	17.9	48.5	62.5	66.7	21.1
1980	0.9	17.0	41.5	57.7	61.9	22.5
1990	0.9	10.2	30.4	52.1	59.5	14.0
<b>Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	--	51.5	66.1	77.3	81.5	75.7
1980	21.8	49.7	66.3	74.3	79.7	74.0
1990	16.7	42.7	58.1	68.3	75.7	64.8
<b>Females</b>						
1970	6.7	24.8	34.5	28.8	21.1	27.2
1980	6.8	28.8	40.7	39.7	34.2	36.8
1990	7.8	23.5	40.5	46.8	44.8	37.3
<b>Previously Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	--	--	50.7	64.5	72.2	60.7
1980	--	--	61.5	61.9	68.2	64.4
1990	--	--	50.0	55.3	66.3	45.8
<b>Females</b>						
1970	--	8.1	38.7	43.2	36.2	35.9
1980	--	19.0	31.6	44.6	43.3	40.3
1990	-	13.5	32.0	31.4	42.0	25.1
<b>Total</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	2.5	18.6	47.9	68.5	77.0	39.4
1980	1.5	21.8	48.5	65.4	74.0	41.4
1990	1.6	15.3	38.5	58.2	69.6	42.4
<b>Females</b>						
1970	1.9	19.1	40.6	36.2	27.9	24.2
1980	1.0	19.2	40.8	44.9	39.6	29.1
1990	1.0	11.7	33.8	48.3	48.3	26.7

Source: Public Use Microdata Files, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

or 1971 for both genders. But unemployment seems to have hit men harder than women: the biggest increase was experienced by men aged 20-24, whose 1991 rate was 20%, an increase from 14% in 1981. The unemployment rate for women in the same age group was 17% in 1991 and 14% in 1981.

As with school attendance, work involvement is highly associated with marital status. Table 1.10 shows the percentage employed full time by marital status and three-year age group among young adults aged 15-29 in the three censuses. Full-time employment is defined here as being employed full time for 40 weeks or more during the year preceding the census, that is, in 1970, 1980 or 1990. Overall, married men have the highest proportion employed full time, with previously-married men the next highest.

Among the never married, the difference between the sexes in percentage employed full time is not large. In contrast, among the married, it is much higher among men than women. However, while the percentage for men declined between 1980 and 1990, that for women has increased steadily since 1970. Among married women aged 27-29, for example, only 21% were employed full time in 1970 but 45% were in 1990. Among the previously married, the percentage with full-time employment in 1990 was lower than that of the married for both men and women.

### **Individual Income**

The recession in the early 1990s not only increased the level of unemployment of young adults but reduced their income as well. Table 1.11 shows the average individual income in 1990 dollars of young adults with full-time employment in 1970, 1980 and 1990. Once again, full-time employment is defined as above. On the whole, average income was lower in 1990 than in 1980. Among men, for example, average income was about \$28,800 in 1980 but by 1990 it had declined to about \$26,500. According to Morissette and associates in 1993, this decline is explained by the fact that young workers are in jobs requiring fewer skills, and consequently that they are paid less than in the past.

In general, the never married have the lowest income and married men have the highest, followed closely by previously married men. In 1990 in the age group 27-29, men who had never married earned on average about \$28,100 and married men about \$32,700, while previously married men earned about \$30,300. These differences probably result from married men having better jobs and working longer hours. It may also be that men with higher income have better chances of getting married and remaining so.

A fact often discussed, the generally lower income of women compared to men, can also be seen in Table 1.11. Among young adults it is certainly the case, although the gap has narrowed between 1970 and 1990. In 1970, the average income of women was 67% of men's but by 1990 it was about 80%. This finding of a narrowing gap in income between men and women is true not only for the young but for older people as well. Rashid in 1991, for example, notes that the overall ratio of average earnings of women to that of men increased annually by an average of half a percentage point between 1970 and 1985.

**Table 1.11 Average Individual Income (Thousands of 1990 Dollars) of Those Employed Full Time in the Population Aged 15-29, By Age Group, Marital Status and Sex, Canada, 1970, 1980 and 1990**

	Age Group					
	15-17	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	15-29
<b>Never Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	8.4	15.1	19.3	23.7	25.5	20.0
1980	13.1	18.9	23.5	27.1	31.6	24.6
1990	10.3	14.8	19.7	25.0	28.1	22.9
<b>Females</b>						
1970	8.9	12.0	15.8	18.8	20.5	15.8
1980	11.2	14.9	18.5	22.7	26.3	19.9
1990	9.1	12.3	16.7	21.7	24.4	19.8
<b>Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	--	19.0	22.6	27.4	31.1	28.0
1980	--	22.3	26.5	31.4	35.3	32.1
1990	--	17.7	23.2	28.8	32.7	30.2
<b>Females</b>						
1970	--	12.8	16.1	18.7	18.3	17.3
1980	--	15.9	18.9	22.5	25.0	21.9
1990	--	13.7	17.6	22.0	24.7	22.3
<b>Previously Married</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	--	--	--	27.2	30.9	27.9
1980	--	--	25.3	29.4	33.3	31.0
1990	--	--	23.0	26.8	30.3	28.9
<b>Females</b>						
1970	--	--	17.6	18.9	22.2	19.6
1980	--	--	18.9	22.1	23.5	22.3
1990	--	--	18.0	21.6	24.7	23.1
<b>Total</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
1970	8.6	15.6	20.7	26.3	30.1	24.9
1980	13.5	19.3	24.6	29.8	34.4	28.8
1990	11.3	15.1	20.7	26.8	31.1	26.5
<b>Females</b>						
1970	9.2	12.2	16.0	18.8	19.3	16.7
1980	11.6	15.2	18.7	22.6	25.2	21.0
1990	9.6	12.7	17.1	21.9	24.6	21.2

Source: Public Use Microdata Files, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

A comparison among young adults by marital status shows that the biggest gains were made by women ever married, but that the gap remains smallest for men and women who have never married. In 1990, in the 24-26 age group, the average income of women working full time who had never married was 87% of that of men in the same circumstances. In the case of married people, the average income of women was, by contrast, 76% of that of men.



## Some Concluding Remarks

If it is impossible to establish here causal links between the family formation, parental status and living arrangements of young adults on the one hand and their school attendance, work status and income on the other, some relationships nevertheless seem to be obvious. For example, the level of full-time employment and the average income of men and women who have never been legally married are lower than those of the ever married. While marital status may affect people's work patterns, the association may also be explained by selection; in other words, those who have full-time employment and higher income are more likely to get married, and sooner. For example, and without excluding the possibility of a mere coincidence, Dumas and Péron in 1992 found that, among men aged 20-24, the percentage marrying is low in periods of high male unemployment. Between 1955 and 1970, a period when the unemployment rate was generally below 10%, the total first-marriage rate was above 900 per 1,000. In contrast, it fell to below 700 per 1,000 during the 1980s, when the unemployment rate was above 10%. The effect of unemployment on marriage and childbearing is perhaps most significant among the younger age groups. Dumas in 1994 notes, for example, that the birth cohort of 1958 experienced a level of unemployment from the ages of 18 to 35 equivalent to one person in 10 being unemployed throughout those ages. This could be expected to lower marriage and birth rates, and delay the age of marriage and childbearing.

Other relationships are not as obvious but some speculations can be offered. It is possible, for example, that less secure employment and lower income lead young adults to favour cohabitation over marriage. The continuing increase in women's levels of schooling and labour force participation, particularly of the married, will reinforce the low fertility of young adults unless work and school become more compatible with childbearing.

Despite the impossibility of establishing causal relationships, it seems that the availability of resources has a big effect on the living arrangements of young adults. Boyd and Pryor in 1989 have found, for example, that school attendance and income are important factors. Their analysis of 1981 census data has shown that, among women aged 20-29, the percentage living with their parents was 19 percentage points higher among those with income below \$2,500 than among those with an income of \$11,500 or more, without taking into account that the parents' income also has an effect. In the United States, Goldscheider and Goldscheider in 1991 have found that the proportion of young adults living independently is almost 17 percentage points higher among those receiving a subsidy of about \$3,000 a year from their parents than among those not receiving any support of this kind. It is not a mere coincidence that the levels of full-time employment, average income and living alone are all lower in 1991 than in 1981. This implies that improved

economic prospects — as much for parents as for their children — would bring an increase in independent living among young adults, while a deterioration would have the opposite effect.





## **Chapter 2**

### **FAMILY PATTERNS AT MID-LIFE (MARRIAGE, PARENTING AND WORKING)**

**Roderic Beaujot**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter considered the family patterns of the young adult population, up to age 29. For young adults, the timing of leaving home and the various ways in which young people enter their first marital union are the important events. Other events happening in their lives, particularly their schooling and work patterns, were also noted. This chapter will analyse family patterns at mid-life, that is, at ages 30-54.

For adults at mid-life, there are several possible patterns of family life. Some are not married, most are continuously in a marital union, others were formerly in a union (are now separated, divorced or widowed), and others are in new unions after the break-up of a previous union. There is also the complication that unions can involve either marriage or cohabitation. In this section of the life course, parenting and work are the other events to consider in people's lives. Throughout, particular attention is paid to differences between the life patterns of women and men.

#### **Marital Status at Mid-Life**

Definitions of marital status change over time, to the point where the census itself has not been consistent in the treatment of persons who are separated and those who are cohabiting. Earlier censuses grouped the married and separated because the separated are still legally married. Current practice is to group the separated and the divorced because both have been married and are no longer married. It is only since the 1981 census that a distinct category for those cohabiting is available. The tendency now is to group those who are cohabiting with the married, since they both involve unions. These very changes in the classification system for marital status already point to important changes in the patterns of family life.

#### **Categories of Marital Status**

Table 2.1 presents the distribution of marital status from 1921 to 1991. Notwithstanding the observations of the previous paragraph, four categories

**Table 2.1 Marital Status of Population Aged 30-54 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921-1991 (in Percent)**

	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
<b>Males</b>								
<b>Single</b>								
30-34	27.8	29.0	29.0	19.6	17.3	13.3	15.0	33.0
35-39	20.1	19.5	21.1	14.9	13.0	10.3	9.3	19.6
40-44	16.5	15.6	16.6	13.3	10.9	9.4	7.8	12.2
45-49	14.1	14.0	14.2	13.1	10.5	9.1	7.5	8.9
50-54	12.9	13.2	13.0	12.6	10.5	8.7	7.8	7.6
Total	19.2	18.7	19.5	15.0	12.7	10.2	10.0	18.0
<b>Married</b>								
30-34	70.6	69.7	70.2	79.9	82.1	85.1	82.1	61.8
35-39	77.7	78.5	77.6	84.2	86.2	87.9	86.9	72.1
40-44	80.3	81.4	81.2	85.2	87.7	88.3	87.9	77.5
45-49	81.6	81.8	82.6	84.6	87.6	88.1	87.8	80.0
50-54	81.3	80.9	82.1	83.7	86.5	88.0	86.8	81.7
Total	77.7	78.2	77.5	83.4	85.9	87.4	85.9	73.3
<b>Widowed</b>								
30-34	1.4	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1
35-39	2.1	1.6	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2
40-44	2.9	2.5	1.9	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.5
45-49	4.0	3.7	2.9	1.8	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.8
50-54	5.6	5.3	4.6	3.2	2.3	1.8	1.6	1.4
Total	2.9	2.7	2.0	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.5
<b>Divorced</b>								
30-34	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.3	2.8	5.1
35-39	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	1.5	3.5	8.1
40-44	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	1.6	3.9	9.9
45-49	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	1.6	3.9	10.4
50-54	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7	1.5	3.8	9.3
Total	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.5	3.5	8.3
<b>Females</b>								
<b>Single</b>								
30-34	17.1	18.7	21.1	13.8	10.5	9.1	10.5	23.2
35-39	13.1	13.6	15.9	12.4	9.2	7.3	7.3	14.3
40-44	11.9	11.3	13.0	12.3	8.9	6.9	6.1	9.5
45-49	11.1	10.3	11.2	11.7	9.5	7.0	5.8	7.3
50-54	11.3	10.6	10.3	10.9	10.4	7.7	6.0	6.2
Total	11.4	13.3	14.9	12.4	9.7	7.6	7.5	13.3
<b>Married</b>								
30-34	79.9	79.3	77.3	84.4	88.1	88.1	84.3	68.8
35-39	82.8	82.7	81.0	84.8	88.5	89.0	85.9	74.1
40-44	82.2	82.8	81.8	83.2	87.0	88.3	85.9	76.2
45-49	80.3	81.4	80.8	81.2	83.7	86.0	84.7	76.6
50-54	75.6	77.3	77.7	77.6	79.2	81.6	81.6	76.8
Total	80.5	80.9	78.6	82.7	85.8	86.7	84.5	74.0
<b>Widowed</b>								
30-34	2.8	1.9	1.3	1.2	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.5
35-39	4.0	3.6	2.7	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.1	0.9
40-44	5.7	5.7	4.8	3.7	3.2	2.7	2.2	1.7
45-49	8.4	8.1	7.7	6.5	5.9	5.0	4.1	3.3
50-54	12.9	11.9	11.7	11.0	9.5	8.8	7.6	6.1
Total	6.0	5.7	5.1	4.3	3.7	3.6	2.7	2.1
<b>Divorced</b>								
30-34	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.6	2.0	4.7	7.5
35-39	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.7	2.1	5.7	10.7
40-44	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.8	2.1	5.8	12.5
45-49	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.9	2.0	5.4	12.8
50-54	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.9	1.9	4.7	10.9
Total	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.8	2.0	5.2	10.6

**Note:** Separated are included with married. In 1971 and 1981, those living common law are included with married. In 1991 those living common law are assigned their legal marital status.

**Source:** Basavarajappa, K.G. *Marital Status and Nuptiality in Canada*, Catalogue No. 99-704, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, 1977, Table 36. 1981 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-901, Table 5 and 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-310, Table 5.

can be used consistently over this period: single (never married), married (including separated), widowed, and divorced.

In 1921 there were 116.5 men per 100 women at ages 30-54, due largely to the predominance of men among immigrants around the turn of the century, while now the numbers of men and women in the mid-life ages have become roughly equal. However, these men and women distribute themselves rather differently by marital status according to their age. Until age 40, women are more likely than men to be married; afterwards it is men who are more likely to be married. Women are more likely to be widowed because of the premature death of their spouse, and more likely to be divorced because they are less likely to remarry than divorced men are.

### *Married*

The married category is clearly dominant, but involves important changes over time. In the fifty years to 1971, the proportion married increased; however, in the subsequent twenty years the proportion declined to the point where it is now lower than in 1921. In the age group 30-34, 71% of men and 80% of women were married in 1921. These figures increased to 85% of men and 88% of women in 1971; however, by 1991 the proportions were 62% for men and 69% for women. While the changes are not as marked in the other age groups, the same pattern still applies: an increase in the proportion married to 1971, then a decline.

It is also useful to consider the proportion of married men and women at different ages. Basically, the proportion married increases continuously with age for men, but tends to reach a peak at ages 40-44 for women. Consequently, men are less likely to be married at ages 30-34, but by ages 50-54 it is women who are less likely to be married.

### *Widowed and Divorced*

In 1990, the proportion of widows and widowers is smaller than in the past: only 2.1% of women and 0.5% of men at ages 30-54. The proportion divorced amounted to less than 2% of the population until 1971, and even in the 1970s when divorce was increasing there were not that many divorced persons in the population due to remarriage. However, the subsequent increases in proportion divorced are significant, reaching 9% of men and 11% of women at ages 50-54 in 1991. At ages 40-54 for women and 45-54 for men there are now more divorced persons than never married.

### *The 1971 Turnaround*

The proportions widowed and divorced are therefore rather straightforward: widowhood is declining as people live longer, and divorce is increasing as marriages are less stable. What is striking in contrast is the



strong change in the proportion of people married that occurred around 1971. This proportion had increased year after year until then and has since been reversed. The change since 1971 is not only a reversal of the earlier trend but is very rapid and involves all age groups at mid-life. Not only young people become less likely to be married, but older persons also reflect the trend. In each of the five-year age groups between 30 and 50, the proportion married is, as mentioned above, lower in 1991 than in 1971. A close examination of Table 2.1 demonstrates that the last two decades have reversed the post-war changes.

### **Marital Status Including Cohabitation**

The married state covers both legally-married and cohabiting couples. Before the 1981 census, no data were available permitting the measurement of the proportion of people in a union who were cohabiting. Careful handling of the responses to the 1981 census permits the estimate that cohabitation represented 4% to 5% of unions in the 30-54 age group. This modest figure suggests that a minimal number of people were cohabiting before that date. In contrast, a clearer and more direct question in the 1991 census permits an estimate of 10%. It is thus important to determine whether the decline in the proportion married and the increase in the proportion single are still visible once married and cohabiting are treated as equivalent.

Table 2.2 gives the results for the 1981 and 1991 censuses. While the trends are not as marked as for the categories of marital status presented earlier, they are still evident. In 1991, persons classified as never married in Table 2.2 (those who are single and not cohabiting), represent 24% of men and 16% of women aged 30-34. These figures are higher than the proportion single as far back as the 1951 census. At the same time, the proportion of people in a union represents 78% of men and 77% of women at mid-life. For men, this is the lowest figure since the 1941 census; for women, it is lower than any of the historical figures in Table 2.1. Clearly, living in a relationship is down compared to the levels experienced over the past fifty years. The corollary is the increase in the proportion not living in relationships. In 1991, those who were separated, divorced or widowed and not cohabiting represented some 8% of men and 13% of women at mid-life. At ages 50-54, the "post-marital single" category represented 10% of men and 18% of women. Even when widowhood was much more common, the formerly married represented a smaller proportion of people at mid-life.

### *First and Subsequent Unions*

For lack of retrospective questions on marital history, census data do not allow a distinction between first and subsequent unions. The General Social Survey can provide estimates for 1990 of the population by age group who

**Table 2.2 Marital Status of Population Aged 30-55 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent)**

	Marital Status							
	Never Married		All Unions				Separated, Widowed or Divorced	
			Cohabiting		Total			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1981								
30-34	15.0	10.5	6.0	4.7	79.1	80.2	6.0	9.4
35-39	9.3	7.3	4.7	3.6	83.8	81.7	6.8	11.0
40-44	7.8	6.1	3.6	2.8	84.8	82.0	7.4	11.9
45-49	7.5	5.8	2.8	2.1	84.6	80.9	7.9	13.3
50-54	7.8	6.0	2.1	1.7	83.7	78.1	8.4	15.8
Total	10.0	7.5	4.1	3.2	82.8	80.6	7.2	11.9
1991								
30-34	24.2	16.3	11.3	10.4	70.2	75.1	5.6	8.6
35-39	14.8	10.7	8.9	8.0	77.3	77.5	7.8	11.7
40-44	9.8	7.9	7.4	6.3	80.8	77.8	9.3	14.3
45-49	7.6	6.4	6.5	5.2	82.4	77.5	10.0	16.2
50-54	6.7	5.6	5.1	3.7	83.3	76.8	10.0	17.5
Total	13.8	10.1	8.3	7.2	77.9	76.9	8.2	13.0

**Note:** For 1981, sample estimates were derived for the separated category. 'All unions' includes married and cohabiting.

**Sources:** 1981 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-901, Table 5 and Catalogue No. 92-325, Table 6.11; 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-310, Tables 3 and 6.

are cohabiting after a previous marriage or are remarried. While remarriage has certainly become more common, it is still experienced by a fairly small proportion of people at mid-life. The General Social Survey data show that some 79% of people in this age group are either still with their first spouse or have not entered another union after the break-up of their first. Data collected in France by Guibert-Lantoine and associates in 1994 indicate a similar order of magnitude: some 77% of persons aged 40-44. In Canada once again, but using data from the 1984 Family History Survey, Burch found that, of all adults who had married, 90% had married only once and less than 1% three or more times.

Taking the whole of the 30-54 age group, some 67% are either married or cohabiting with no previous marriage while 12% are remarried or cohabiting after a previous marriage (Table 2.3). Men are more likely to be in a subsequent union while women are more likely to be separated, divorced or widowed.

**Table 2.3 Marital Status of Population Aged 30-54 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990 (in Percent)**

Marital Status	Age Group					
	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	Total
<b>Males</b>						
Single	22.3	11.6	8.8	6.0	7.7	12.3
Separated or Divorced	4.0	6.5	8.0	9.6	8.7	7.0
Widowed	-	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.3
Total Not in Union	26.3	18.3	17.2	16.2	17.1	19.6
Married or Cohabiting with No Previous Marriage	67.8	68.0	66.9	65.0	69.5	67.4
Remarried or Cohabiting After Previous Marriage	5.9	13.9	15.8	18.8	13.4	13.0
Total in Union	73.7	81.9	82.7	83.8	82.9	80.4
<b>Females</b>						
Single	12.8	10.2	6.1	3.7	4.4	8.2
Separated or Divorced	7.2	11.4	11.9	17.7	14.2	11.8
Widowed	0.1	1.0	0.8	3.1	4.3	1.5
Total Not in Union	20.1	22.6	18.8	24.5	22.9	21.5
Married or Cohabiting with No Previous Marriage	69.8	64.7	69.6	63.3	68.5	67.3
Remarried or Cohabiting After Previous Marriage	10.1	12.6	11.6	12.2	8.7	11.2
Total in Union	79.9	77.3	81.2	75.5	77.2	78.5

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

### *The Common Life Trajectories*

To conclude this section on marital status at mid-life, Table 2.4 presents estimates of the more common trajectories that men and women experience. Only the two states of "in union" and "not in union" have been used in this table in order to reduce the alternative life paths that need to be considered. A total of five trajectories are included. These can be compared among four cohorts born between 1911 and 1950.

The estimate of those who would never have been in a union from the age of 30 to 54 is generally under 10%, reaching its lowest point of around 6% in the 1921-1940 birth cohorts, and rising again for the most recent cohort.

The most common trajectory involves persons who were in a union at age 30, with no further changes between age 30 and 54. About three-quarters

**Table 2.4 Union Status Changes Between Ages 30 and 54, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911-1950**

	Birth Cohort							
	1911-1920		1921-1930		1931-1940		1941-1950 <sup>1</sup>	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Sample Size	362	518	665	751	803	811	1,134	1,144
Percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Not in Union at 30; No Further Change Between Ages 30 and 54	8.2	10.8	6.1	5.7	6.1	5.0	9.1	8.2
In Union at 30; No Further Change Between Ages 30 and 54	83.4	71.1	81.9	73.0	75.7	73.1	73.0	71.7
No Union at 30; Change to Union Between Ages 30 and 54	1.6	0.6	0.7	1.6	1.6	3.2	3.4	4.0
In Union at 30; Change to No Union Between Ages 30 and 54	4.2	15.1	5.8	14.1	8.1	12.1	6.8	9.9
In Union at 30; Change to No Union Change to Union Between Ages 30 and 54	2.6	2.5	5.5	5.4	8.5	6.7	7.7	6.2

<sup>1</sup> These cohorts have not been exposed to the risks of change as long as the other cohorts.

**Note:** Union includes married and cohabiting; No union includes never married, divorced and widowed.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

of persons in each cohort have had this experience. For women, the estimates are remarkably constant over the cohorts, ranging from 71% to 73%. For men, there is a decline from 83% in the 1911-20 cohort to 73% in the 1941-50 cohort.

While the other trajectories are increasing, they clearly represent a minority of life experiences. The most common of these patterns involves marriage or cohabitation followed by a stage of being separated, divorced or widowed. Those who were in a union at age 30 and subsequently experienced a non-union state that lasted until age 54 amount to 4% to 8% of men and 10% to 15% of women. For men, this pattern is less common than that of not being in a union throughout mid-life; however, it has increased from 4% in the first group of cohorts to 7% in the last. For women, the absence of a spouse during part of mid-life is more common than not being in a union throughout; however, the pattern has declined from 15% to 10%.

The fifth pattern is in a sense the counterpart of the preceding one, since it involves people who were in a marital union at age 30 but thereafter lived a segment of their lives outside of any union before remarrying or cohabiting. With the exception of the 1931-40 cohorts, this pattern of union dissolution and reformation involves a smaller proportion than the never married: less than 8% of men and just slightly over 6% of women in the most recent cohort.

The proportions who were not in a union at age 30 but who experienced a union between ages 30 and 54 are remarkably low, reaching only 3% to 4% in the most recent cohort. Persons who are not in a union at age 30 have tended not to marry or cohabit during mid-life.



In summary, for the most recent group of cohorts on which estimates are possible, that is, persons born between 1941 and 1950, some 72% were in a union at age 30 and can be expected to remain in a union until age 54. They therefore make up the majority. The second most common pattern also involves uniformity, i.e., not being in a union at age 30 and not entering one during the remainder of mid-life. The next most common patterns involve persons who change from union to no union, or from union to no union to union. Together these two patterns amount to some 15% of people. The least common pattern involves persons who were not in a union at age 30 but who subsequently experienced a union during mid-life.

Because the analysis is carried out with data from a retrospective survey, a bias is introduced because only those surviving can be respondents. The bias is greater for older respondents, even without taking into account lapses of memory. On the other hand, the group of 1941-50 cohorts has not been exposed to the risks as long as the preceding groups of cohorts, which will certainly affect the percentages presented in the table. Caution is therefore required in the interpretation of trends.

### **Living Arrangements at Mid-Life**

The living arrangements that are particularly relevant for people at ages 30-54 include living with spouse and children, living with spouse only and living as a lone parent with children. Together, these three categories represent three-quarters of persons at mid-life. The proportions of persons living alone or living with a spouse without children have increased at the expense of two-parent families with children.

### **Patterns by Age and Sex**

Table 2.5 shows the six most common living arrangements at mid-life. Persons living in collective households have been excluded here; they represent only 0.5% of persons at this stage of life.

The most common pattern is for people to be living with spouse and children only, that is, with no other persons beyond the immediate two-generation nuclear family. This represents 62% of persons aged 30-54 in 1981 and 55% in 1991. This 10-year decline is significant not only because it is reflected in each age group but because it is especially marked at the younger and older ages in mid-life. Direct comparisons are not possible with the 1971 census, but the comparisons that can be made indicate at least as much change between 1971 and 1981 in the direction of fewer people living with a spouse and children. However, the only age groups where fewer than half lived with a spouse and children in 1991 were men aged 30-34, women aged 45-49, and men and women aged 50-54.

**Table 2.5 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 30-54 by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent)**

Person Living	30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1981												
Alone	8.6	6.1	7.3	4.5	5.8	4.1	6.2	5.4	7.2	7.5	7.2	5.5
With Spouse Only	13.8	9.8	8.4	6.3	7.3	7.3	10.5	13.4	19.5	24.5	11.9	11.6
With Spouse and Children	58.0	63.5	67.7	67.5	69.4	65.8	64.5	57.7	54.5	43.7	62.7	60.5
Single Parent and Children Only	0.5	5.8	1.2	7.6	1.9	7.6	2.1	7.7	1.9	7.2	1.4	7.1
With Parents	4.4	2.2	2.8	1.4	2.0	1.1	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.0	2.6	1.5
Other	14.6	12.7	12.6	12.7	13.6	14.1	15.1	14.7	15.7	16.1	14.2	13.9
1991												
Alone	10.6	6.9	9.9	6.2	8.4	6.3	8.4	8.1	8.3	9.9	9.3	7.2
With Spouse Only	15.6	12.9	11.0	9.4	10.4	10.9	15.1	19.6	26.7	32.2	14.9	15.3
With Spouse and Children	48.7	55.6	59.6	61.0	63.6	59.1	60.0	49.4	47.0	36.0	56.1	53.9
Single Parent and Children Only	0.6	6.9	1.3	8.4	2.2	9.1	2.4	8.0	2.1	6.2	1.6	7.8
With Parents	6.4	3.0	3.4	1.8	2.1	1.3	1.4	0.9	1.1	0.8	3.2	1.7
Other	18.0	14.8	14.7	13.2	13.4	13.2	12.8	14.1	14.7	14.9	14.9	14.0

**Note:** The 'Other' category includes persons living with people beyond the spouse, children and parents. This includes persons living with immediate family members plus other persons.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

A related pattern involves living with a spouse only, representing 12% in 1981 and 15% in 1991. Similar numbers, about 14%, are living with one or more other persons beyond spouse, parents and children.

For women, the next most common experience involves living as a single parent with children only. This represents some 7% to 8% of women aged 30-54, but fewer than 2% of men in this age group. Men are more likely to be living with their own parent or parents, although they still represent only 2% to 3% of cases.

Finally, those living alone amount to some 6% in 1981 and 8% in 1991. These figures are higher for men than for women. Harrison in 1981 tabulates the category of living alone by age in the 1961 and 1971 censuses; this shows that living alone was then very rare for persons in mid-life. For instance, at ages 35-44 in 1961, only 2.1% of men and 1.7% of women were living alone. By 1991, these figures had risen to 9.2% and 6.3% for men and women respectively.

**Table 2.6 Living Arrangements by Sex and Place of Birth, for Population Aged 30-54, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent)**

Person Living	Canada		Europe and United States		Other		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>1981</b>								
Alone	7.2	5.7	7.1	4.7	7.5	5.2	7.2	5.5
With Spouse Only	12.1	11.8	12.1	12.2	8.5	7.1	11.9	11.6
With Spouse and Children	63.0	60.5	63.9	63.3	55.5	52.5	62.7	60.5
Single Parent and Children Only	1.5	7.4	1.4	5.4	0.9	7.0	1.4	7.1
With Parents	3.0	1.6	1.3	0.7	1.5	1.1	2.6	1.5
Other	13.3	12.9	14.2	13.7	26.1	27.0	14.2	13.9
<b>1991</b>								
Alone	9.8	7.8	8.2	5.3	6.1	4.2	9.3	7.2
With Spouse Only	15.8	16.3	14.3	15.5	8.1	7.0	14.9	15.2
With Spouse and Children	56.1	54.0	59.8	57.9	51.0	48.4	56.1	54.0
Single Parent and Children Only	1.7	8.0	1.5	6.6	1.1	7.6	1.6	7.8
With Parents	3.5	1.8	1.9	0.9	2.2	2.1	3.2	1.7
Other	13.1	12.0	14.4	13.8	31.5	30.7	14.9	14.0

**Note:** The 'Other' category includes persons living with people beyond the spouse, children and parents. This includes persons living with immediate family members plus other persons.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

### Differences by Place of Birth and Education

Living arrangements are relatively similar for the three birthplaces shown in Table 2.6. The main difference is that persons born in places other than Canada, Europe and the United States are less likely to be living with a spouse and without children and more likely to be living with one or more persons beyond spouse, parents and children. The proportion living with other persons reaches 30% at these mid-life ages in 1991. They are consequently less likely to be living only with spouse and children. In effect, the group having other birthplaces is more likely to be in a more complex living arrangement. Similar results are found for 1971, where this birthplace group stands out as being more likely to be living with people to whom they are related but who are not spouses or never-married children, or not to be in a family, and consequently less likely to be living with a spouse or never-married child.

Table 2.7 makes similar comparisons by level of education. The higher the level of education, the greater the likelihood of living alone and the less

**Table 2.7 Living Arrangements by Sex and Level of Schooling for Population Aged 30-54, Canada, 1981 and 1991 (in Percent)**

Person Living	Elementary		Secondary		Post-Secondary				Total	
	M	F	M	F	Non-university		University			
					M	F	M	F	M	F
Alone With Spouse Only With Spouse and Children Single Parent and Children Only With Parents Other	1981									
	6.2	3.5	6.1	4.1	6.5	5.9	10.2	10.9	7.2	5.5
	10.0	11.0	11.6	11.9	12.0	11.0	13.5	12.3	11.9	11.6
	57.9	56.5	63.9	63.5	66.8	62.5	60.7	55.1	62.7	60.5
	1.4	7.6	1.5	6.7	1.3	7.6	1.3	6.7	1.4	7.1
	20.5	19.7	14.0	12.6	11.5	11.5	12.1	13.2	14.2	13.9
	3.9	1.7	2.8	1.2	1.8	1.4	2.2	1.9	2.6	1.5
	1991									
	8.4	6.0	8.3	5.0	9.0	7.5	11.2	11.1	9.3	7.2
	14.0	15.8	14.6	15.5	15.1	15.2	15.3	15.1	14.9	15.3
	49.8	46.5	56.3	56.7	58.4	54.6	55.8	51.4	56.1	54.0
	1.9	8.4	1.7	7.7	1.5	8.7	1.5	6.9	1.6	7.8
	4.5	2.3	3.8	1.5	2.7	1.6	2.5	2.1	3.2	1.7
21.5	21.0	15.4	13.7	13.3	12.5	13.7	13.5	14.9	14.0	

**Note:** The 'Other' category includes persons living with people beyond the spouse, children and parents. This includes persons living with immediate family members plus other persons.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

the likelihood of living in a complex arrangement. However, in essentially all education groups, more than half of persons at mid-life are living only with a spouse and children.

### Summary of Living Arrangements

Living arrangements at mid-life predominantly involve immediate nuclear families, with less than a quarter of persons living either alone or with other persons beyond spouse, children and parents. While the proportion living with children (with or without a spouse) has declined from 66% to 60% between 1981 and 1991, it still represents the most common experience. Non-family living arrangements are clearly increasing: more people live alone and fewer with children. However, family relationships continue to predominate as living arrangements for people at mid-life.

### Parental Status: Adults at Mid-Life and Children

The two previous sections have shown that the majority of adults at mid-life are married and living in a nuclear family. At the same time, a growing minority of people do not fit this pattern: there are important proportions who are not married or who are living only with a spouse, and significant numbers who are living alone. The following concentrates on children in the lives of adults at mid-life. While the majority of adults number children among the members of their family, they are having fewer of them and a growing minority do not live with them.



**Table 2.8 Women Ever Married by Age Group, Showing Children Ever Born, Canada, 1941-1991 (in Percent)**

Age Group	Children Ever Born							Average Number of Children
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 +	
30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54  30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54  30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54  30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54  30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54  30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54	1941 <sup>1</sup>							
	18.2	21.8	21.7	13.9	8.8	5.7	9.9	2.43
	14.2	16.6	19.7	14.3	10.1	6.9	18.3	3.21
	12.7	14.1	17.4	13.9	10.3	7.5	24.1	3.81
	12.3	12.4	15.5	13.4	10.6	8.0	27.9	4.18 <sup>2</sup>
	12.3	12.4	15.5	13.4	10.6	8.0	27.9	4.18 <sup>2</sup>
	14.1	15.8	18.2	13.8	10.0	7.1	21.0	3.50
	1961							
	9.7	14.0	25.9	21.8	13.5	7.1	7.9	2.78
	9.1	12.4	23.7	20.8	13.7	8.0	12.3	3.10
	10.3	13.1	22.8	18.6	12.6	7.8	14.9	3.23
	13.1	15.1	22.5	16.8	10.8	6.7	14.9	3.13 <sup>2</sup>
	15.3	15.8	21.3	14.9	9.8	6.6	16.4	3.13 <sup>2</sup>
	11.2	13.9	23.4	19.0	12.3	7.3	12.9	3.06
	1971							
	9.4	12.8	29.5	24.1	13.1	5.9	5.2	2.62
	7.4	9.4	23.6	23.6	16.4	8.9	10.9	3.16
	8.2	9.8	21.7	21.0	15.6	9.4	14.3	3.35
	9.6	11.3	22.0	19.6	14.0	8.5	15.1	3.32
	11.8	13.1	22.4	18.0	12.2	7.7	14.8	3.19
	9.2	11.2	23.9	21.4	14.3	8.1	12.0	3.12
	1981							
	14.2	19.1	41.4	18.2	5.0	1.3	0.7	1.88
	9.3	13.1	38.3	23.8	9.6	3.3	2.4	2.33
7.3	9.9	29.2	25.4	14.7	6.9	6.6	2.84	
7.2	9.0	22.9	22.9	16.5	9.3	12.2	3.26	
8.4	9.4	21.2	20.8	15.4	9.5	15.3	3.41	
9.7	12.8	32.0	22.0	11.5	5.5	6.6	2.64	
1991								
19.0	21.6	38.8	15.6	3.8	0.8	0.4	1.68	
13.0	16.4	42.9	20.2	5.5	1.3	0.7	1.96	
10.7	14.7	43.1	21.8	6.8	1.9	1.1	2.10	
9.4	12.6	38.1	24.1	9.9	3.4	2.6	2.36	
8.0	10.0	28.9	25.4	14.4	6.8	6.5	2.81	
12.6	15.7	39.2	20.9	7.4	2.4	1.9	2.11	

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Newfoundland. Excludes women for whom age at first marriage was not stated and women for whom the number of children ever born was not stated.

<sup>2</sup> Age group 45-64 in 1941 and 1961.

**Sources:** 1941 Census of Canada, Table 51; 1961 Census of Canada, Bulletin 4.1-7, Table G1; 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-718, Bulletin 1.2-6, Table 24; 1981 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-906, Tables 1 and 2; 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-321, Table 1.

## **Children Ever Born**

The census uses the concept of children ever born to measure childbearing. This question has been asked since 1941, but it has only been asked of women and, before 1991, only of women ever married. Table 2.8 gives the historical series.

At ages 30-34 in 1941, 82% of ever-married women had had children; this proportion increased to 91% in 1971, then declined to 81% in 1991. The increase in the period 1941 to 1971 was therefore wiped out by the decline over the subsequent period. The number of births per woman for this group is relatively stable between 1941 and 1971, around 2.4 to 2.8 births, but then experiences a major decline to 1.7 in 1991.

At ages 40-44, the proportion of ever-married women who have had children is slightly higher (87% in 1941 and 89% in 1991). All the same, the average number of children per woman in this age group has declined over the same period, from 3.8 to 2.1.

For ever-married women between the ages of 50 and 54, the proportion who have had children was lowest in 1961, at 85%, and increased to 92% in 1991. However, the average number of births has moved in the opposite direction, from 4.2 per woman in 1941 to 2.8 in 1991.

Clearly, the experience of the majority of ever-married women in mid-life is to have children: the highest proportion with no children is 19% for women who were 30-34 in 1991, the same percentage as in 1941. The lowest proportion with no children among women in the oldest age group, 50-54, is 8% in 1991. These are rather small variations, and women who were in mid-life in 1991 capture the entire variation found between 1941 and 1991 at these ages.

Differences in the number of births per woman are much stronger than those in the proportion having had at least one child. Except for the age group 30-34, where there are increases from 1941 to 1971, the trend in any given age group is largely downward. The strongest decline is for women aged 50-54, from an average of 4.2 births in 1941 to 2.8 in 1991.

While the proportion with six or more children has clearly declined, there is remarkable stability in the proportion with two or more children.

## **Children Ever Born for all Marital-Status Categories, 1991**

The 1991 census asked all women the number of children they had ever borne (Table 2.9). The proportion of women with children is 72% at ages 30-34 and increases to 88% at ages 50-54. Similarly, the number of births per woman increases from 1.5 for the youngest to 2.7 for the oldest of these mid-life age groups, a difference of more than one child.

**Table 2.9 Children Ever Born to Women Aged 30-54 by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991**

Marital Status	Number of Children Ever Born							Average Number of Children
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 +	
Total Single Ever Married Married Legal Marriage Cohabitation Separated Widowed Divorced	30-34							
	28.5	20.2	33.5	13.5	3.3	0.7	0.4	1.47
	78.5	12.8	5.6	2.1	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.35
	19.0	21.6	38.8	15.6	3.8	0.8	0.4	1.68
	18.6	21.1	39.5	15.9	3.8	0.8	0.4	1.69
	15.0	20.4	42.1	17.2	4.1	0.8	0.4	1.79
	41.3	25.2	22.9	7.9	1.9	0.5	0.3	1.07
	16.7	24.3	36.4	15.8	4.9	1.3	0.6	1.75
	18.4	21.1	37.4	14.9	4.6	1.5	2.0	1.83
	26.4	27.6	30.7	11.3	3.1	0.7	0.3	1.41
	35-39							
	19.8	16.1	38.9	18.3	5.0	1.2	0.7	1.79
	77.8	13.2	5.3	2.2	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.37
	13.0	16.4	42.9	20.2	5.5	1.3	0.7	1.96
12.3	15.3	43.8	20.9	5.6	1.3	0.7	1.99	
10.1	14.3	45.7	22.0	5.9	1.3	0.7	2.07	
32.2	24.0	27.9	11.1	3.3	0.9	0.6	1.35	
12.5	20.4	39.8	19.0	5.8	1.7	0.8	1.94	
13.6	21.5	37.9	17.8	5.5	2.0	1.7	1.94	
20.2	26.0	34.6	13.7	4.1	1.0	0.5	1.61	
Total Single Ever Married Married Legal Marriage Cohabitation Separated Widowed Divorced	40-44							
	15.9	14.5	40.2	20.3	6.4	1.8	1.0	1.97
	78.7	12.2	5.2	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.38
	10.7	14.7	43.1	21.8	6.8	1.9	1.1	2.10
	10.2	13.4	44.0	22.6	6.9	1.8	1.1	2.13
	8.8	12.8	45.1	23.3	7.1	1.9	1.1	2.18
	25.7	20.9	31.2	14.7	4.9	1.6	0.9	1.62
	9.8	18.0	41.1	20.3	6.9	2.4	1.5	2.11
	10.9	19.5	36.9	18.8	8.5	3.1	2.5	2.17
	15.5	23.3	37.5	15.9	5.4	1.6	0.8	1.81
	45-49							
	13.7	12.4	36.0	22.7	9.4	3.3	2.5	2.24
	80.8	10.7	4.2	1.9	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.38
	9.4	12.6	38.1	24.1	9.9	3.4	2.6	2.36
9.0	11.7	38.8	24.8	10.0	3.3	2.5	2.37	
9.0	10.1	27.7	22.8	13.7	7.1	9.6	2.97 <sup>1</sup>	
19.0	14.0	23.9	18.0	10.7	6.0	8.3	2.51 <sup>1</sup>	
8.0	14.7	36.1	22.4	10.9	4.5	3.5	2.44	
10.2	14.5	31.9	22.2	11.0	4.8	5.4	2.51	
12.8	18.1	34.8	19.8	8.8	3.3	2.4	2.15	
Total Single Ever Married Married Legal Marriage Cohabitation Separated Widowed Divorced	50-54							
	12.1	9.9	27.5	24.1	13.7	6.5	6.2	2.68
	83.4	8.3	3.4	1.9	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.38
	8.0	10.0	28.9	25.4	14.4	6.8	6.5	2.81
	7.8	9.5	29.5	25.9	14.5	6.7	6.2	2.81 <sup>1</sup>
	9.0	10.1	27.7	22.8	13.7	7.1	9.6	2.97 <sup>1</sup>
	19.0	14.0	23.9	18.0	10.7	6.0	8.3	2.51 <sup>1</sup>
	7.2	11.1	26.5	24.2	14.5	7.3	9.1	2.97
	8.7	11.0	24.8	22.2	14.4	8.7	10.2	3.04
	9.8	13.9	27.2	23.3	13.1	6.5	6.1	2.66
	30-54							
	19.1	15.4	35.8	19.0	6.7	2.2	1.7	1.94
	79.0	12.3	5.2	2.1	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.36
	12.6	15.7	39.2	20.9	7.4	2.4	1.9	2.11
12.3	14.9	40.0	21.3	7.4	2.3	1.7	2.12	
10.4	14.2	41.3	22.2	7.7	2.4	1.8	2.19	
32.6	22.7	26.9	11.7	3.9	1.3	0.9	1.40	
11.5	18.7	37.1	19.7	7.7	2.9	2.4	2.14	
10.4	14.9	30.7	20.8	11.1	5.7	6.4	2.58	
16.8	22.0	33.6	16.7	6.7	2.5	1.8	1.91	

<sup>1</sup> For age groups 45-49 and 50-54, the proportion of cohabitation for over 45 was used to distribute the married into the categories of legal marriage and cohabitation.

Source: 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-321, Tables 2 and 3.

Breaking down the 40-44 age group by marital status shows that 21% of the never married have had children, although they average only 0.4 births per never-married woman. In all other groups the majority have had children, an average of some two per woman. Among these women, it is those who are cohabiting who have the fewest: 74% have had children, with an average of 1.6 per woman. Among the others (of whom many are married), the proportion having had children is in the range of 85% to 90%, and the number of births per woman is in the range of 1.8 to 2.2. That is, other than in the single and cohabiting categories there is very little difference by marital status in the proportion of women who have had children and in the number of births per woman.

Particularly noteworthy is the observation that separated and widowed women have as many children as those who are married, with the divorced having only slightly fewer. Clearly, the experience of the majority in each of the age groups at mid-life is to have children. In 1991 the proportion with no children ever born is only 12% for the 50-54 age group and 29% for the 30-34 age group.

At age groups 40-44 and older, the proportion of women with two or more children is above 60% except for single and cohabiting women. At ages 40-44, women who are cohabiting (53% of whom have had two or more children) are closer to married women (78% of whom have had two or more children) than to single women (9% of whom have had two or more children). This result is also evident in other measures shown in Table 2.9: while cohabiting women have fewer children than those who are married, they are closer to the levels of married or previously-married women than to that of single women.

### **Living with Children for Women and Men**

The census does not permit one to consider the remarried as a separate category, nor to look at the children ever born to men. The 1990 General Social Survey provides some estimates, presented in Table 2.10. Children here are measured in two ways: children ever born and children (natural, adopted or step) currently living with a given parent.

At ages 30-34, the experience of men and women is relatively different. Some 58% of men have had children, but only 52% of men have children living with them. In comparison, 73% of women in this age group have had children, and 71% are living with children. The differences by marital status are greater for men than for women, especially for those who are not married. For the separated, widowed and divorced, a very small proportion of men compared to 77% of women are living with children.<sup>1</sup> Living with children

---

<sup>1</sup> This comparison is based on a very small number of observations. More reliable estimates for the 30-54 age group suggest a narrower gap (22% for men, 63% for women).



**Table 2.10 Children Ever Born and Children Currently Living with Parents for Women and Men Aged 30-54, by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1990**

Marital Status	Children Ever Born					Average Number of Children	Children Living with Parents					Average Number of Children
	0	1	2	3	4 +		0	1	2	3	4 +	
Single Married or Cohabiting Remarried Separated, Widowed or Divorced Total	Males											
	30-34											
	93.4	4.1	2.4	-	-	0.09	97.5	2.5	-	-	-	0.03
	27.7	23.0	39.4	7.4	2.4	1.34	28.2	23.4	39.5	6.7	2.2	1.31
	18.2	39.4	24.3	9.2	8.9	1.58	60.5	24.5	13.1	1.9	-	0.57
	--	--	--	--	--	1.39	--	--	--	--	-	0.15
	41.8	19.8	30.3	5.8	2.3	1.07	48.1	18.0	27.6	4.8	1.5	0.93
	40-44											
	92.9	1.0	-	5.0	1.0	0.20	99.0	1.0	-	-	-	0.01
	9.4	13.3	45.4	24.4	7.6	2.09	11.6	15.2	47.6	18.8	6.8	1.95
	11.2	28.0	32.1	14.8	13.9	1.96	49.4	21.3	25.2	1.7	2.3	0.86
	22.1	16.1	43.7	17.6	0.5	1.58	63.7	13.9	19.1	3.3	-	0.62
	18.2	14.8	39.1	20.6	7.4	1.85	29.7	14.8	37.4	13.1	4.9	1.49
Single Married or Cohabiting Remarried Separated, Widowed or Divorced Total	50-54											
	--	--	-	-	-	0.12	100.0	-	-	-	-	-
	5.3	10.0	32.2	28.8	23.8	2.71	36.0	27.5	23.6	9.3	3.6	1.18
	5.0	18.3	29.6	34.6	12.5	2.55	65.1	24.9	5.0	5.0	-	0.50
	--	--	--	--	--	2.25	--	--	--	-	--	0.20
	12.2	10.9	29.8	28.1	19.0	2.45	49.6	23.3	17.4	7.2	2.6	0.90
	30-54											
	91.9	4.3	1.5	1.1	1.2	0.16	97.3	1.7	-	-	1.0	0.06
	14.2	16.1	42.9	18.4	8.5	1.95	20.8	21.3	40.4	12.7	4.8	1.61
	13.7	22.0	39.2	13.4	11.6	1.96	51.9	22.7	20.0	2.6	2.7	0.82
	22.1	20.6	34.7	17.9	4.7	1.64	78.1	11.7	8.4	1.6	0.1	0.34
	24.3	15.7	36.7	15.6	7.7	1.71	38.4	18.4	30.4	9.0	3.7	1.22
	Single Married or Cohabiting Remarried Separated, Widowed or Divorced Total	Females										
30-34												
79.0		8.6	6.8	4.3	1.2	0.41	80.5	8.5	5.9	4.8	0.4	0.36
19.4		21.4	39.1	14.8	5.4	1.67	20.2	21.5	38.8	15.1	4.4	1.63
19.0		22.1	38.1	14.3	6.6	1.67	26.7	22.1	36.8	11.7	2.8	1.42
15.3		29.9	37.5	12.8	4.5	1.63	22.6	29.4	33.0	12.1	3.0	1.44
26.7		20.4	34.7	13.3	4.9	1.50	28.7	20.4	33.9	13.2	3.7	1.43
40-44												
79.3		18.0	2.7	-	-	0.23	79.3	18.0	2.7	-	-	0.23
--		--	--	--	--	2.21	--	--	--	--	--	1.98
15.5		20.2	40.3	14.3	9.6	1.87	39.8	31.6	16.8	10.7	1.2	1.02
19.3		16.7	42.6	19.1	2.4	1.69	38.1	32.5	25.2	4.2	-	0.96
15.6		13.3	41.6	20.3	9.2	1.98	23.1	19.6	35.1	17.1	5.1	1.63
Single Married or Cohabiting Remarried Separated, Widowed or Divorced Total	50-54											
	74.9	18.1	-	7.1	-	0.39	85.7	14.3	-	-	-	0.14
	3.9	8.0	32.7	30.5	24.9	2.89	48.1	28.9	19.0	1.9	2.1	0.82
	3.0	19.9	36.5	17.5	23.1	2.61	79.0	15.6	1.8	3.6	-	0.30
	8.2	10.7	42.0	17.5	21.6	2.52	50.2	36.4	13.3	-	-	0.63
	7.8	10.0	33.3	25.9	23.0	2.69	52.8	28.5	15.6	1.6	1.4	0.71
	30-54											
	82.7	10.1	3.6	2.6	1.0	0.29	85.5	9.1	3.1	2.1	0.2	0.22
	12.3	13.3	41.5	21.3	11.6	2.14	22.2	20.4	37.0	15.5	4.9	1.62
	13.6	19.7	38.4	15.0	13.3	2.01	41.3	24.4	23.1	7.9	3.4	1.08
	14.5	19.1	36.7	17.1	12.6	2.02	37.4	30.0	22.8	8.3	1.4	1.07
	18.5	14.5	37.4	18.5	11.0	1.96	31.5	21.2	30.8	12.6	3.9	1.38

Note: Children living with parents includes only natural, adopted, and stepchildren.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

is also more common for remarried women than men: 73% compared to 39%. That is, at ages 30-34, while the majority of men who are in a first union are living with children, that does not apply to men who are in a subsequent union or who are not in a union. For women in this same age group, with the exception of the never married, the majority are living with children.

There are similar variations at ages 40-44, though the differences are not as marked. Men in this age group have an average of 1.9 children ever born, and 1.5 children are living with them, compared to women with 2.0 children ever born and 1.6 children living with them. The experience of married or cohabiting men and women is similar, but in other marital statuses there are considerable differences. For instance, 51% of remarried men and 36% of separated, widowed or divorced men are living with children, compared to 60% of remarried women and 62% of separated, widowed or divorced women. All these observations are explained by the fact that it has been the custom up to now to give the mother the custody of children on divorce or separation.

At the oldest of the age groups examined here, half of men and 53% of women are not living with children. While they have had on average 2.7 children per woman and 2.5 per man, the average numbers living with parents are reduced to 0.7 and 0.9 for women and men respectively. The major differences are in the married or cohabiting category and the remarried category, where a higher proportion of men than women are living with children. This is largely a function of the age difference of spouses and a reflection of the greater propensity of men than women to establish a second family.

Considering the total over all marital-status categories, living with children is more common for women in the early years of mid-life but is also the dominant experience for at least half of each age group for both men and women. About half of men aged 30-34 are living with children, reaching a peak of 70% at ages 40-44, and falling to half once again at ages 50-54. For women, 71% are living with children at ages 30-34, reaching a peak of 77% at ages 40-44, and falling to slightly less than half by ages 50-54. These observations are explained by the fact that the children of older parents have often left home.

Table 2.10 does not permit the measurement of change over time, which would clearly be in the direction of lower proportions living with children. For instance, in a 1990 study Burch found that at ages 40-59 some 29% of persons were living with children under 15 years of age in 1986 compared to 33% in 1981.

Part of this change over time is a function of the increasing size of marital-status categories other than married or cohabiting. As Table 2.10 shows, people, especially men, who are single, separated, widowed or divorced, and even those who are remarried, are less likely to be living with children.

**Table 2.11 Intended Number of Children by Age, Sex and Marital Status, Canada, 1990**

Marital Status	Males						Females					
	0	1	2	3	4 +	Average Number of Children	0	1	2	3	4 +	Average Number of Children
<b>30-34</b>												
Never Married	12.1	8.5	58.5	17.6	3.3	1.93	23.3	10.2	42.7	19.7	4.0	1.73
Married or Cohabiting	8.2	9.7	49.3	23.9	9.0	2.21	5.7	10.5	52.8	22.6	8.5	2.19
Remarried or Cohabiting	0.0	13.6	29.7	36.7	20.0	2.65	7.8	10.9	52.1	19.4	9.9	2.13
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	7.6	12.6	35.5	20.1	24.2	2.41	1.8	24.3	46.7	20.2	7.0	2.08
Total	8.5	9.8	49.4	23.3	9.1	2.19	7.7	11.5	51.1	21.7	8.0	2.12
<b>35-39</b>												
Never Married	21.8	3.7	58.8	3.2	12.5	1.81	52.7	8.6	33.0	3.8	1.9	0.94
Married or Cohabiting	9.9	10.5	51.3	19.9	8.3	2.11	11.0	7.4	52.8	20.8	8.1	2.09
Remarried or Cohabiting	2.8	10.0	61.8	11.3	14.1	2.32	12.5	24.6	39.2	12.8	10.9	1.91
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	17.6	19.8	31.4	18.5	12.6	1.93	15.3	19.8	35.6	22.1	7.2	1.91
Total	10.5	10.2	52.6	17.0	9.7	2.10	15.7	11.3	47.0	18.3	7.7	1.93
<b>40-44</b>												
Never Married	55.5	7.5	20.7	16.3	-	0.98	76.7	12.1	11.2	-	-	0.30
Married or Cohabiting	9.5	11.4	46.6	24.5	8.1	2.12	9.1	10.2	45.6	24.5	10.6	2.22
Remarried or Cohabiting	9.1	21.9	33.7	14.0	21.3	2.28	13.3	18.6	44.1	14.8	9.3	1.93
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	22.0	14.3	42.8	19.4	1.5	1.66	18.5	18.2	42.3	18.6	2.5	1.68
Total	13.3	13.0	42.7	21.9	9.1	2.03	15.1	12.3	42.8	21.1	8.7	2.00

**Note:** The intended number of children includes those already born and those they plan to have.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990

However, over three-quarters of men and women at mid-life are living in a relationship. For these the majority experience is by far to have children and to be living with them at least until the 45-49 age group.

### Intended Births

A more complete picture of the childbearing of younger people can be obtained by including expected future births. To determine intended births, the 1990 General Social Survey first asked about the respondent's ability to have children and their intention to have children. Those who responded that they were not able to have children or were no longer able to have any, or that they did not intend to have children or further children, were classified as intending to have no more children. In all other cases, the intended number of children was recorded. However, these questions were only asked of respondents who were under 45 years of age. Some men over 45 may have intended to have children in future but these would not be recorded. Table 2.11 shows the total number of children that people intend to have, including those they already have.

Some of these expectations may not be realistic, especially on the part of men, and of people not in a relationship. Nonetheless, it is interesting

that people in most age, sex and marital-status categories expect to have on average two or more children. For all marital-status categories combined, men aged 30-44 expect some 2 to 2.2 children, while women expect some 1.9 to 2.1 children. In the age groups 35-39 and 40-44, men expect considerably more additional births than women: single men an average of 1.7 additional births at ages 35-39 and 0.7 at ages 40-44, and single women 0.8 and 0.1 births respectively. While the differences are small, it is interesting that expectations are highest for the youngest age group.

### **Childlessness**

The data presented here do not suggest that levels of childlessness are increasing. Basing his conclusion on data from the 1971 census, Grindstaff (1975) has suggested that some 20% of couples may choose to remain childless in the near future. Although observing that this applies especially to younger ages where people may still have children, Ram (1990:29) also notes the “steadily-rising proportion of childless couples”.

However, among ever-married women aged 45-54, that is, where childbearing is complete, the levels of childlessness vary from 10% to 15% in the 1941-71 censuses (Table 2.8). Counting women of all marital statuses, childlessness is below 15% at ages 45-54 in 1991. Taking seriously the intended births from the 1990 General Social Survey means that childlessness would not exceed 16% for women and 13% for men among those aged 30-44 in 1990. Noting in particular that younger persons without children are often delaying their births, Ram in 1988 concludes that there is not a widespread rejection of parenthood. Similar conclusions are drawn in the United States, where the proportion with no children has declined over the birth cohorts 1905-1909 to 1935-1939 and where about 10% of younger cohorts expect to remain childless (Sweet and Bumpass, 1987).

### **Differentials by Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics**

Table 2.12 gathers some basic differentials in the number of children ever born, based on socio-cultural characteristics (mother tongue, place of birth), geographic characteristics (region, living in a census metropolitan area versus a smaller centre) and socio-economic characteristics (education, work status, income). The basic observation is that socio-cultural and geographic differences are declining, while socio-economic differences remain important.

#### *Socio-Cultural and Geographic Characteristics*

In the age group 40-44, the 1971 differences over the mother-tongue categories amounted to 1.0 child, compared to 0.3 in 1991. In 1971, those



**Table 2.12 Average Number of Children Ever Born to Ever-Married Women Aged 30-34, 40-44 and 50-54, Showing Mother Tongue, Place of Birth, Region, Education, Work Status, and Income, Canada, 1971-1991**

	1971			1981			1991		
	30-34	40-44	50-54	30-34	40-44	50-54	30-34	40-44	50-54
<b>Total</b>	2.62	3.37	3.17	1.87	2.84	3.35	1.68	2.10	2.81
<b>Mother Tongue</b>									
English	2.69	3.22	2.86	1.87	2.90	3.26	1.70	2.10	2.84
French	2.61	3.92	4.23	1.81	2.80	3.74	1.57	1.99	2.76
Other	2.45	2.96	2.71	2.00	2.74	3.06	1.79	2.30	2.80
<b>Place of Birth</b>									
Canada	2.73	3.55	3.32	1.88	2.94	3.49	1.67	2.08	2.88
Europe and United States	2.25	2.69	2.53	1.84	2.50	2.74	1.71	2.08	2.46
Other	2.07	2.83	2.76	1.78	2.65	3.78	1.73	2.29	2.95
<b>Region</b>									
Atlantic	3.22	4.56	4.31	2.12	3.56	4.11	1.78	2.30	3.41
Quebec	2.48	3.57	3.74	1.79	2.71	3.50	1.57	1.98	2.66
Ontario	2.51	3.05	2.66	1.83	2.72	3.10	1.65	2.08	2.74
West	2.76	3.25	2.98	1.92	2.91	3.29	1.78	2.17	2.86
Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)	..	..	..	1.67	2.54	2.93	1.53	1.98	2.59
Non-CMA	..	..	..	2.08	3.16	3.80	1.90	2.29	3.15
<b>Education</b>									
Elementary	3.04	3.91	3.84	2.48	3.33	3.90	2.38	2.65	3.37
Secondary	2.60	3.16	2.79	2.00	2.90	3.18	1.86	2.14	2.84
Post-Secondary, Non-university	2.30	2.92	2.58	1.78	2.59	2.96	1.63	2.09	2.60
University	2.00	2.71	2.38	1.44	2.30	2.85	1.33	1.88	2.30
<b>Work Status</b>									
Employed Full Year	2.00	2.88	2.65	1.49	2.59	3.02	1.42	1.99	2.64
Employed Part Year	2.50	3.18	3.11	1.93	2.93	3.40	1.78	2.23	2.95
Not Employed	2.95	3.72	3.50	2.29	3.15	3.62	2.22	2.38	3.04
<b>Income<sup>1</sup></b>									
Under \$10,000	2.85	3.58	3.42	2.19	3.07	3.60	2.07	2.34	3.08
\$10,000-\$24,999	2.03	2.89	2.62	1.73	2.79	3.20	1.62	2.18	2.82
\$25,000-\$39,999	1.40	2.38	2.32	1.19	2.35	2.68	1.26	1.88	2.46
\$40,000-\$59,999	--	--	--	1.02	2.05	2.74	1.05	1.68	2.15
\$60,000 +	--	--	--	1.40	2.05	2.38	1.14	1.60	2.24

<sup>1</sup> Individual income adjusted to 1990 dollars.

Source: Public Use Microdata Files, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

of French mother tongue had the highest average number of children, but in 1991 they had the lowest average. Those with a mother tongue other than English or French have moved in the opposite direction, from the lowest average number of births to the highest. Similarly, by place of birth and for the same age category 40-44, women born in Canada had the most births in 1971 while those born outside of Canada, Europe and the United States had the most in 1991. However, the differences have declined from 0.9 to 0.2 births across the three categories presented.

The differences have also declined between regions and between those living in census metropolitan areas and those living outside them. In 1971, the regional differences at age 40-44 involved 1.5 children, with the Atlantic region having the highest average. By 1991, the regional differences are limited to 0.3 children. Persons living in census metropolitan areas have fewer children, but the difference has declined from 0.6 children in 1981 to 0.3 children in 1991.

### *Socio-Economic Characteristics*

Turning to socio-economic characteristics, all differentials are in the same direction, and they remain important. For instance, women with higher levels of education have fewer children. At ages 40-44, the difference from lowest to highest level of education has declined but remains important at 0.8 children in 1991. At ages 30-34, the difference across these levels of education involves one child both in 1971 and in 1991.

Especially for younger women, the difference by work status also remains important. women aged 30-34 who were not employed had 0.8 more children than those employed full time in 1991.

By personal income, the differences are again rather uniform in the direction of fewer children for women with more income. While they have declined, they remain significant. For instance, in 1991 the difference amounts to 0.9 children at ages 30-34, 0.7 children at ages 40-44 and 0.8 children at ages 50-54. The conclusion is that women without employment have more children and less money.

### *Conclusion on Differentials*

Analysts of the 1971 census such as Collishaw in 1976 concluded that the relationship of fertility to family income was changing from negative to positive. That is certainly not the case when one uses the individual employment income of women as the base for comparisons. These differentials clearly imply that, for women, there is competition between work status (higher education, working full time and higher income) and average number of children.

At the same time, there are similar average numbers of children across various parts of Canadian culture as defined by mother tongue, place of birth, region and residence in a census metropolitan area. The analysis of the 1971 census data on fertility had already noted the declining importance of differences associated with cultural identity (Collishaw, 1976). These changes imply that various parts of Canadian society have similar orientations toward what is appropriate in terms of having children and of numbers of children.

## Families, Parenthood and Work

Three work-status categories are used: working full time, working part time and not employed. An overriding trend is the increased labour-force participation of women. However, there remain significant differences by marital status, with married women and persons caring for young children being more likely to work part time or to be unemployed. There are also very important income differences, not only by gender, marital status and presence of children, but also between two-parent and one-parent families.

### Proportions Employed by Gender

The longest historical series can be obtained for the employment / population ratio, which is the number of persons employed divided by the population, by age and sex (Table 2.13). In the censuses of 1931 and 1941, the numerator is not total persons employed but total wage earners. Persons who are self-employed, including farmers and persons with small businesses, would be included in the numerator for 1951-91 but not in 1931 and 1941. Partly because of changing definitions, the employment / population ratio has increased over time for men, reaching a peak in 1981, but the increase for women is particularly evident. For instance, in 1931 only 9.5% of women at ages 35-44 were wage earners, while in 1991 72.0% were employed. At ages 45-54 the changes are similar, from 7.0% in 1931 to 65.4% in 1991. The gender difference has clearly been reduced over time, but remains significant since some 85% of men are employed at these ages.

**Table 2.13 Labour-Force Participation Rate and Employment / Population Ratio, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1931-1991**

Year	Labour-Force Participation Rate				Employment / Population Ratio			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	35-44	45-54	35-44	45-54	35-44	45-54	35-44	45-54
1931 <sup>1</sup>	..	..	..	..	62.0	55.6	9.5	7.0
1941 <sup>1</sup>	..	..	..	..	60.4	57.3	12.6	8.6
1951	96.7	94.5	21.8	20.4	..	..	..	..
1961	94.3	91.9	31.1	33.4	..	..	..	..
1971	92.8	90.3	43.9	44.4	88.8	86.3	41.4	42.1
1981	95.1	92.0	64.4	55.9	90.4	87.4	59.6	52.0
1991	94.3	91.2	79.7	71.8	85.6	83.6	72.0	65.4

<sup>1</sup> Total wage earners divided by total population.

Source: Decennial Censuses of Canada, 1931-1991.

## Proportions Employed by Gender and Marital Status

The effect of family situation on labour-force participation and employment is evident from the consideration of differences over marital-status categories. Table 2.14 shows the employment / population ratio. Particularly evident here is the "marital-status suppressor" by which it is especially married women who are less likely to be employed while married men have the highest employment ratio.

For instance, in the age group 35-44 the employment / population ratios are not very different for men and women in the categories "single" and "widowed and divorced"; in fact, since 1981, single women are more often employed than single men. However, there has been considerable change for married women, from 38% employed in 1971 to 73% in 1991, although the proportion employed remains significantly higher for married men,

**Table 2.14 Labour-Force Participation Rate and Employment / Population Ratio by Sex, Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1951-1991**

	Ages 35-44					Ages 45-54				
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
<b>Labour-Force Participation Rate</b>										
<b>Males</b>										
Total	96.7	94.2	92.8	95.2	94.5	94.5	92.1	90.3	92.3	91.5
Single	..	82.3	79.8	84.8	84.6	..	76.8	74.0	77.6	75.3
Married	..	95.9	94.4	96.4	96.2	..	93.8	92.2	93.8	93.4
Widowed and Divorced	..	86.7	88.9	91.6	90.4	..	97.1	83.7	86.2	84.1
<b>Females</b>										
Total	21.8	31.0	43.9	64.3	79.6	20.4	33.3	44.4	55.9	71.9
Single	..	77.5	75.3	81.7	83.3	..	72.7	71.4	77.6	77.0
Married	..	25.1	40.4	62.2	79.0	..	26.3	40.4	53.2	71.1
Widowed and Divorced	..	60.1	63.0	73.1	81.6	..	55.2	59.8	64.8	74.5
<b>Employment / Population Ratio</b>										
<b>Males</b>										
Total	..	..	88.8	91.6	87.0	..	..	86.3	88.7	85.0
Single	..	..	72.2	77.3	72.1	..	..	67.0	70.6	64.5
Married	..	..	90.9	93.3	89.8	..	..	88.6	90.8	87.5
Widowed and Divorced	..	..	80.3	84.5	77.6	..	..	75.6	78.6	73.3
<b>Females</b>										
Total	..	..	41.4	60.2	72.9	..	..	42.1	52.5	66.3
Single	..	..	72.4	78.3	76.2	..	..	68.9	74.7	71.9
Married	10.5	21.0	38.1	58.1	72.5	8.8	21.1	38.2	50.0	65.7
Widowed and Divorced	..	..	58.7	68.0	73.1	..	..	56.2	60.5	67.4

**Note:** Separated are included with married. In 1951 and 1961, the employment / population ratio is the population of wage-earners to the total population.

**Sources:** 1951 Census of Canada, Volume 7.1-12, Tables XVII, XVIII and Table 9; 1961 Census of Canada, Volume I, Table 78; 1971 Census of Canada, Volume 3.7, Table 6; 1981 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-915, Table 1; 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-324, Table 1.



**Table 2.15 Proportion Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Sex and Marital Status, Ages 35-44 and 45-54, Canada, 1971-1991**

	Males			Females		
	Full Time	Part Time	Un-employed	Full Time	Part Time	Un-employed
<b>Ages 35-44</b>						
<b>1971</b>						
Total	81.0	14.9	4.0	25.4	23.6	51.0
Married or Cohabiting	84.2	13.6	2.2	20.7	24.1	55.2
Single	60.7	22.1	17.2	64.4	16.9	18.7
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	69.2	22.7	8.1	43.0	23.8	33.2
<b>1981</b>						
Total	81.2	14.4	4.4	35.8	30.8	33.4
Married or Cohabiting	84.2	13.2	2.6	31.7	32.6	35.5
Single	58.9	22.0	19.1	62.9	15.9	21.2
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	72.9	19.3	7.8	48.8	25.5	25.8
<b>1991</b>						
Total	77.8	16.4	5.8	50.3	30.5	19.2
Married or Cohabiting	81.4	14.8	3.8	47.8	32.6	19.5
Single	58.9	23.6	17.5	64.0	19.2	16.8
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	68.8	21.6	9.7	55.4	25.7	18.8
<b>Ages 45-54</b>						
<b>1971</b>						
Total	78.9	15.5	5.6	28.4	21.0	50.6
Married or Cohabiting	82.5	14.1	3.4	23.1	21.3	55.6
Single	56.3	22.0	21.7	61.1	14.3	24.6
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	62.1	25.4	12.5	42.0	23.5	34.5
<b>1981</b>						
Total	78.0	15.0	7.0	33.5	26.1	40.5
Married or Cohabiting	81.5	13.9	4.6	29.3	27.6	43.1
Single	53.2	21.0	25.9	61.4	13.4	25.2
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	64.7	20.7	14.6	44.5	22.8	32.8
<b>1991</b>						
Total	76.9	15.1	8.0	47.1	26.7	26.2
Married or Cohabiting	80.0	14.1	5.9	45.0	28.2	26.8
Single	54.2	20.7	25.2	60.9	16.0	23.1
Separated, Widowed or Divorced	65.6	19.3	15.0	52.2	23.2	24.6

**Note:** Full-time means full time for 40 or more weeks and part time from 1 to 39 weeks..

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

showing 90% employed in the 35-44 age group in 1991. Over time, there has not been much change for men within marital-status categories, nor for single women. It is the married and formerly married women who have increased their employment ratios at ages 35-44.

At ages 45-54, single women are more likely to be in the labour force than single men. Once again it is married men who are most often employed (88%) and married women who are least often employed (66%). Over time, employment rates have increased for married women as well as the widowed and divorced, have remained rather stable for single women, but have declined since 1981 for men, especially in the non-married categories.

### **Proportions Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed**

Table 2.15 separates those working into two categories. Persons are considered to be working full time if they indicated that they work mostly full time and if they worked 40 or more weeks in the previous year. All other employed persons are here considered as working part time, that is, they work part time or they worked for less than 40 weeks in the previous year.

#### *Change over Time*

Both in age groups 35-44 and 45-54, the proportion of married women working full time has increased significantly both for married and formerly married women (Table 2.15). Single women are more likely to be working full time than single men, and there has been very little change in this between 1971 and 1991. Formerly married women are intermediate between single and married women in terms of proportion working full time. These proportions have increased significantly over time, but remain lower than for men. Once again, it is in the married category that men and women are most different, with some 46% of women compared to 80% of men working full time in 1991. Nonetheless, this difference has become smaller: in 1971, some 22% of married women and 83% of married men were working full time.

While the differences are smaller than in the past, marriage reduces the likelihood that women will work full time and increases the likelihood that men will work full time. The effect is strongest for persons who are currently married (or cohabiting), but also applies to persons who were formerly married (separated, widowed or divorced).

#### *By Presence of Children*

Men who are living with children are more likely to be working full time while women who are living with children are less likely to be working full time (Table 2.16). The differences are also systematic by age of children: the younger the children the more likely it is that men will be working full time and the less likely it is that women will be working full time. For instance, in the age group 30-34, some 33% of women with children 0-5 are working full time, compared to 70% of women with no children. Conversely, in this

**Table 2.16 Proportion Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed by Sex, Presence of Children and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1991**

	Males			Females		
	Full Time	Part Time	Un-employed	Full Time	Part Time	Un-employed
<b>30-34</b>						
Total	75.9	19.2	4.9	45.3	33.6	21.1
Child Aged 0-5	80.1	16.4	3.5	33.2	38.7	28.1
Aged 6-14	73.4	21.5	5.1	41.9	36.1	22.0
Aged 15 +	63.6	24.8	11.5	56.4	26.4	17.2
No Child	72.1	21.6	6.3	70.3	22.1	7.7
<b>35-39</b>						
Total	77.9	17.0	5.0	48.1	32.2	19.8
Child Aged 0-5	81.8	14.6	3.6	35.2	36.7	28.2
Aged 6-14	80.4	15.8	3.8	45.9	34.8	19.3
Aged 15 +	71.6	21.4	7.0	54.4	28.5	17.1
No Child	71.2	20.8	8.1	67.6	21.6	10.8
<b>40-44</b>						
Total	79.5	15.1	5.5	52.1	29.1	18.8
Child Aged 0-5	81.1	14.3	4.7	38.5	31.6	29.9
Aged 6-14	83.2	13.1	3.7	47.2	33.1	20.0
Aged 15 +	81.3	14.3	4.5	55.3	27.6	17.1
No Child	70.6	19.4	9.9	62.5	22.3	15.2
<b>45-49</b>						
Total	78.5	14.9	6.5	50.4	27.5	22.1
Child Aged 0-5	75.9	16.9	7.2	39.8	26.5	33.7
Aged 6-14	81.4	13.8	4.8	43.7	31.5	24.9
Aged 15 +	83.0	12.7	4.3	51.1	28.0	21.0
No Child	70.6	18.5	10.9	54.1	24.4	21.4
<b>50-54</b>						
Total	74.7	15.8	9.5	43.0	25.8	31.2
Child Aged 0-5	67.5	18.8	13.6	36.0	23.6	40.4
Aged 6-14	75.9	16.0	8.0	37.5	27.2	35.3
Aged 15 +	79.9	13.6	6.5	43.2	26.5	30.3
No Child	69.3	17.8	12.9	43.8	25.2	31.0
<b>30-54</b>						
Total	77.4	16.6	6.0	48.0	30.2	21.8
Child Aged 0-5	80.4	15.6	4.0	34.4	37.1	28.5
Aged 6-14	80.5	15.2	4.4	45.0	34.0	21.0
Aged 15 +	80.5	14.1	5.4	50.5	27.5	22.0
No Child	70.9	19.9	9.2	59.0	23.2	17.7

**Note:** Based on persons living in private households, and excluding persons aged 30-54 who are 'children' in these households.

**Source:** Special tabulation from the 1991 Census of Canada.

same age group, 80% of men with children 0-5 are working full time, compared to 72% of men with no children. This also means that, when there are no children present, work patterns are very similar for women and men, especially at the youngest ages at mid-life.

### *By Presence of Spouse*

The differences by presence of spouse are as significant as those by presence of children (Table 2.17). Men are more likely to be working full time when they are living with a spouse while the opposite holds for women. For the whole of the age group 30-54, the proportion of men working full time amounts to 81% when there is a spouse present, and to 64% when there is no spouse present. For women, 46% are working full time when there is a spouse present and 56% when there is no spouse present.

### *By Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children*

The age group 40-44 is shown in Figure 2.1. Two categories of presence of children are used: a child under 15 is present, and no child is present. The categories of presence of spouse are divided into those who have a spouse

**Table 2.17 Proportion Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Presence of Spouse and Five-Year Age Group, Ages 30-54, Canada, 1991**

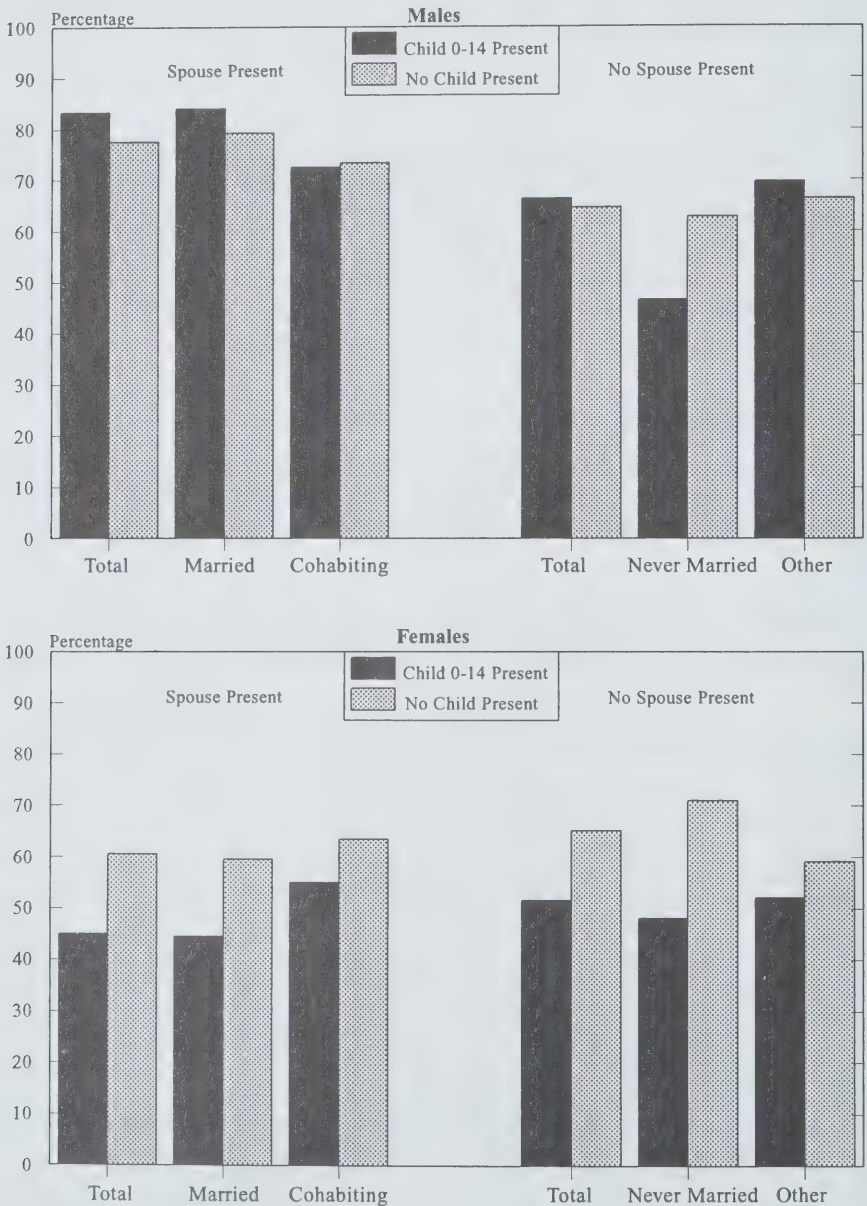
	Males			Females		
	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed
<b>30-34</b>						
Spouse	79.4	17.3	3.3	42.4	35.8	21.8
No Spouse	65.0	25.2	9.9	55.2	25.9	18.9
<b>35-39</b>						
Spouse	81.2	15.3	3.5	45.6	34.3	20.2
No Spouse	64.6	23.7	11.7	57.2	24.6	18.3
<b>40-44</b>						
Spouse	82.5	13.7	3.9	50.1	30.8	19.1
No Spouse	65.1	21.5	13.4	59.4	22.9	17.7
<b>45-49</b>						
Spouse	81.6	13.7	4.7	48.5	29.0	22.5
No Spouse	63.2	21.1	15.7	57.2	22.0	20.8
<b>50-54</b>						
Spouse	78.0	14.8	7.2	40.8	27.2	32.0
No Spouse	57.9	20.7	21.4	50.6	21.1	28.2
<b>30-54</b>						
Spouse	80.7	15.1	4.3	45.6	32.1	22.3
No Spouse	63.8	23.0	13.2	56.2	23.6	20.2

**Note:** Based on persons living in private households, and excluding persons aged 30-54 who are 'children' in these households.

**Source:** Special tabulation from the 1991 Census of Canada.



**Figure 2.1 Proportion Working Full Time, by Sex, Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children Aged 0-14, Persons Aged 40-44, Canada, 1991**



**Note:** Based on persons living in private households and excluding persons aged 30-54 who are 'children' in these households.

**Source:** Special tabulations from the 1991 Census of Canada.

present (for those married or cohabiting) and those who have no spouse present (for never married and other). Both the presence of children and the presence of a spouse are related to the probability of men and women working full time. For men, the presence of a spouse has a larger effect than the presence of children. The result is that 83% of men in the age group 40-44 living with a spouse and children under 15 are working full time, compared to 65% of those not living with a spouse or children.

For women, it is the presence of children that has the larger effect in reducing the proportion working full time but the presence of a spouse further reduces it. Consequently, 45% of women in the age group 40-44 living with a spouse and children under 15 are working full time compared to 65% of those not living with a spouse or children.

Since spouse and children push men and women in opposite directions, those most similar are those with neither spouse nor children, where 65% of both men and women work full time. In the sub-category of those who have never been married and have no children, women are even more likely than men to be working full time. It is also noteworthy that it is marriage rather than cohabitation that enhances men's likelihood of working full time and reduces women's likelihood of working full time.

### **Individual Income**

Income is a common currency that can be used in analysing family and work questions. Incomes differ considerably by gender, marital status and family characteristics.

Not only does marriage reduce the likelihood that women will work full time, as we have seen, but among those working full time it is women who are married who have the lowest average income. As with work status, those who were formerly married are intermediate between the married and never married. There are important changes for married women over time both in work status and in relative income, but the differences in comparison to married men remain strong at mid-life.

#### *By Presence of Children*

Within categories of work status (full time, part time, unemployed) the employment income of women is higher when there are no children present, but other differences by age of youngest child are not large (Table 2.18). When there are no children present, women's and men's incomes are more alike, especially at the younger ages. For instance, at ages 30-39 among persons not living with children, the income of women working full time is 84% of men's. In contrast, among persons living with children 0-5, the average income of women working full time is only 68% of men's.

**Table 2.18 Average Individual Income (Thousands of Dollars) of Persons Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Sex, Five-Year Age Group and Presence of Children, Canada, 1990**

	Males				Females			
	Total	Full Time	Part Time	Un-employed	Total	Full Time	Part Time	Un-employed
<b>30-34</b>								
Average	32.2	36.1	16.7	14.4	19.6	26.2	11.1	8.7
Child Aged 0-5	34.3	37.7	17.9	16.2	17.8	25.6	11.6	8.8
Aged 6-14	30.5	34.5	16.9	14.3	15.9	21.8	9.1	7.5
Aged 15 +	25.4	30.0	13.9	14.4	19.4	23.9	10.1	9.1
No Children	30.3	34.8	15.6	13.0	25.2	29.3	12.6	10.3
<b>35-39</b>								
Average	36.6	40.7	18.1	15.4	21.2	27.6	11.9	9.8
Child Aged 0-5	40.0	43.7	19.3	17.1	21.3	30.1	13.3	9.9
Aged 6-14	36.6	40.1	19.0	15.4	18.9	25.0	11.1	9.6
Aged 15 +	31.8	36.0	17.7	16.7	18.7	23.2	10.3	9.0
No Children	32.8	37.7	16.3	13.9	27.1	31.7	13.0	10.6
<b>40-44</b>								
Average	39.9	43.8	19.7	17.4	22.5	28.3	12.4	10.8
Child Aged 0-5	42.6	46.7	20.0	16.5	23.4	31.8	13.8	11.0
Aged 6-14	41.8	45.1	21.2	19.1	21.6	28.2	12.6	10.6
Aged 15 +	38.8	42.1	20.4	19.0	20.6	25.3	11.5	11.1
No Children	35.2	40.1	17.5	15.6	26.4	31.4	12.7	10.6
<b>45-49</b>								
Average	41.5	45.6	20.4	17.8	22.1	27.8	12.2	10.7
Child Aged 0-5	41.1	45.9	19.3	20.0	20.9	27.3	12.2	9.5
Aged 6-14	43.7	47.7	21.1	19.7	21.9	28.8	12.8	11.7
Aged 15 +	43.2	46.5	22.2	20.4	21.3	26.6	12.0	10.5
No Children	36.9	41.9	18.4	14.1	23.5	28.9	12.0	10.5
<b>50-54</b>								
Average	40.0	44.3	20.8	18.0	20.6	26.4	11.5	11.1
Child Aged 0-5	38.5	44.4	18.7	12.8	16.6	21.7	9.2	10.4
Aged 6-14	39.4	43.5	20.5	15.1	19.9	26.1	12.1	9.0
Aged 15 +	42.9	46.5	22.6	18.7	20.1	25.7	11.5	11.6
No Children	37.2	41.9	19.7	18.5	21.2	27.2	11.5	11.0
<b>30-54</b>								
Average	37.5	41.6	18.7	16.6	21.2	27.3	11.8	10.1
Child Aged 0-5	37.7	41.4	18.7	16.6	19.4	27.5	12.2	9.4
Aged 6-14	39.2	42.9	19.8	17.3	19.4	25.8	11.3	9.7
Aged 15 +	41.2	44.8	21.3	19.0	20.5	25.6	11.6	10.9
No Children	33.8	38.6	17.1	15.1	24.6	29.7	12.3	10.7

**Note:** Based on persons living in private households, and excluding persons aged 30-54 who are 'children' in these households. Excludes persons with no employment income.

**Source:** Special tabulation from the 1991 Census of Canada.

**Table 2.19 Average Individual Income from Employment (Thousands of Dollars) of Persons Working Full Time, Part Time and Unemployed, by Sex, Five-Year Age Group and Presence of Spouse, Canada, 1990**

	Males				Females			
	Total	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed	Total	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed
<b>30-34</b>								
Spouse	33.6	37.1	17.6	16.3	18.9	25.7	11.1	8.4
No Spouse	27.4	32.5	14.7	11.9	22.1	27.4	10.9	9.9
<b>35-39</b>								
Spouse	38.1	41.7	19.2	16.9	20.4	27.0	11.9	9.5
No Spouse	29.9	35.4	15.3	12.8	24.2	29.5	11.9	11.1
<b>40-44</b>								
Spouse	41.2	44.7	20.8	18.1	21.6	27.6	12.3	10.4
No Spouse	32.7	38.2	16.6	15.9	25.7	30.6	13.0	12.2
<b>45-49</b>								
Spouse	42.7	46.4	21.4	19.7	21.1	26.9	11.9	10.3
No Spouse	34.4	40.5	16.9	13.2	25.5	30.4	13.2	12.2
<b>50-54</b>								
Spouse	41.1	45.0	21.7	19.2	19.6	25.5	11.3	10.6
No Spouse	33.3	39.2	17.5	14.1	23.8	28.7	12.4	12.8
<b>30-54</b>								
Spouse	39.0	42.7	19.8	18.1	20.3	26.6	11.7	9.7
No Spouse	30.7	36.2	15.8	13.4	24.2	29.3	12.1	11.6

**Note:** Based on persons living in private households, and excluding persons aged 30-54 who are 'children' in these households. Excludes persons with no employment income.

**Source:** Special tabulation from the 1991 Census of Canada.

### *By Presence of Spouse*

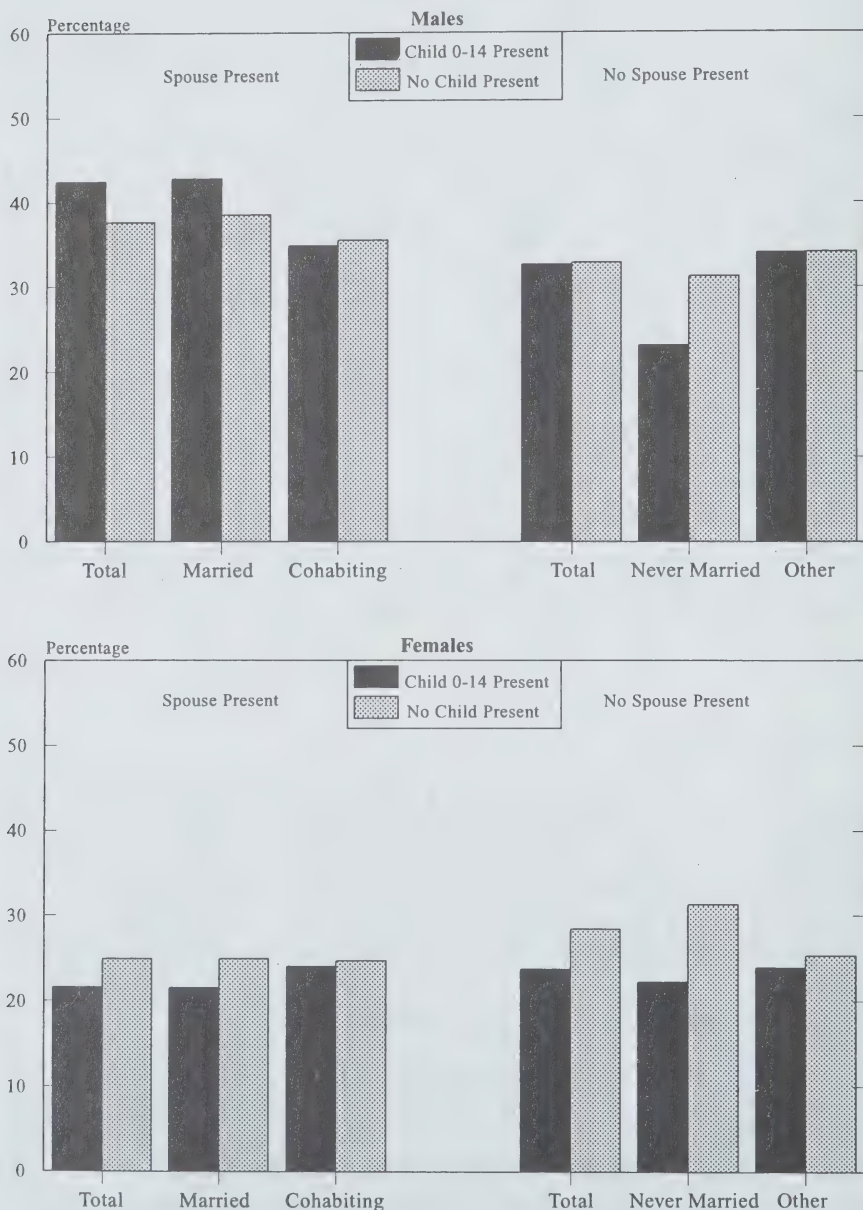
In each age group, men living with a spouse have higher average employment income while the opposite is the case for women (Table 2.19). The highest average income occurs for men aged 45-49 living with a spouse and the lowest for women aged 30-34 living with a spouse. Among persons not living with a spouse, incomes are more alike. For instance, at ages 30-39 for those working full time, women's average income is 84% of men's.

### *By Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children*

Figure 2.2 shows average employment income for all persons in the age group 40-44 and Figure 2.3 shows the same for those working full time. With one exception, the presence of a spouse and the presence of children increase men's average income and decrease women's. The exception involves men with no spouse where the average incomes are the same regardless of the presence of children. In the case of men's average income, the comparisons that can be made imply that the presence of a spouse plays a larger role than the presence of children. For women of all employment statuses, the opposite



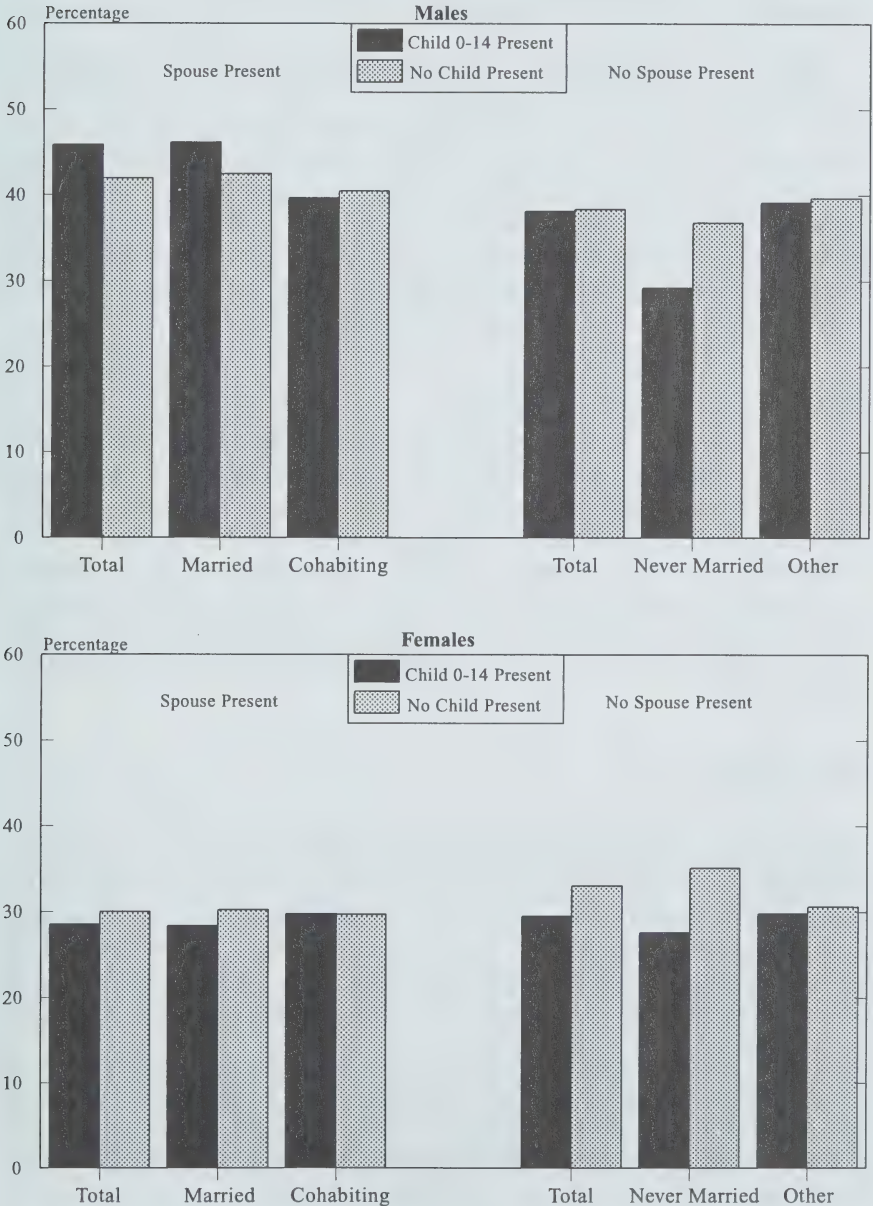
**Figure 2.2 Average Individual Employment Income (Thousands of Dollars), by Sex, Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children Aged 0-14, Persons Aged 40-44, Canada, 1990**



**Note:** Based on persons living in private households and excluding persons aged 30-54 who are 'children' in these households. Excludes those with no employment income.

**Source:** Special tabulations from the 1991 Census of Canada.

**Figure 2.3 Average Individual Employment Income (Thousands of Dollars), by Sex, Presence of Spouse and Presence of Children Aged 0-14, Persons Working Full Time Aged 40-44, Canada, 1990**



**Note:** Based on persons living in private households and excluding persons aged 30-54 who are 'children' in these households. Excludes those with no employment income.

**Source:** Special tabulations from the 1991 Census of Canada.

is the case: the presence of a child decreases income by about 15%, and the presence of a spouse reduces it by about 10%. For women employed full time, the presence of a child or of a spouse decreases income by about the same amount, 8% and 6% respectively.

Once again, the smallest differences occur for the never married with no children. Here the average employment income of women aged 40-44 is the same as the average employment income of men. For persons in this category working full time, the average income of women is 95% of the average income of men. The difference between never-married women and men is not very large for those living with children. Both of these categories have very low income, with an average of \$23,100 for men and \$22,200 for women. It is also noteworthy that cohabitation neither increases men's income nor reduces women's as much as marriage does.

### *Conclusion on Individual Income*

While the work statuses of men and women have become more alike and the two-income family is clearly the dominant category for persons at mid-life, family structure continues to affect the lives of women and men rather differently. In particular, marriage and children reduce the labour-force involvement and income of women and enhance the labour-force involvement and income of men. The groups that are most alike are the never married with no children, especially at younger ages. It would appear that the family plays a large role in the income difference between women and men at mid-life.

### **Family Income**

Since the employment income of men is highest when they are married while that of women is lowest, it is understandable that some of the income differences are reduced once families are used as the unit of analysis. Five categories of family status are used in Table 2.20: husband-wife families with no children, husband-wife families with children, one-parent families with children, persons not in families, and persons in multiple-family households. Income is income from all sources before tax.

For adults at mid-life, the majority are living in husband-wife families either with children (61%) or with no children (16%). These families' income is highest. At ages 30-39 couples with no children have the highest income while at ages 40-54 couples with children have the highest income.

The big differences that are observed involve single-parent families, which account for 7% of individuals at mid-life (4% of men and 10% of women). The average income of female-led single-parent families is only two-thirds

**Table 2.20 Average Family Income (Thousands of Dollars) of Persons with Various Family Statuses, by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990**

Age Group	Husband and Wife with No Child	Husband and Wife with Child	One Parent with Child	Not in Families	Multiple- Family Household
30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54	Males				
	56.7	51.3	40.8	26.8	42.0
	59.5	56.5	38.7	28.4	46.4
	60.8	63.5	42.1	30.5	49.9
	59.8	69.8	46.0	30.7	57.3
	57.3	71.8	46.4	28.6	52.3
	58.5	61.1	42.3	28.6	47.9
30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 30-54	Females				
	58.6	52.1	22.1	23.9	39.3
	61.1	58.0	24.9	25.8	42.7
	60.0	65.6	30.6	26.0	48.7
	55.8	70.1	34.8	24.1	51.0
	52.5	69.4	36.7	21.9	45.0
	56.8	61.7	28.5	24.4	44.5

**Note:** All never-married children in the household are counted as children.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata File, 1991 Census of Canada.

of that of male-led single-parent families. The differences are strongest at the youngest ages.

Persons not living in families represent 14% of adults at mid-life. Their incomes are clearly lower, but they relate to only one person rather than a family. The gender difference is not as strong: women's average income is 85% of men's.

Finally, 2% of the age group are in multiple-family households, where average incomes are intermediate, with minimal gender differences.

Since three-quarters of family experiences at mid-life involve families with two spouses, and since incomes are highest in this group, the lower individual income of women is much less visible at the family level. While this analysis does not pay attention to all the pressures on families, some of the pressure associated with lower female income is compensated at the family level by higher male income. However, when women are single parents, which represents one case in ten among women at mid-life, they suffer a significant disadvantage.



## Conclusion

Many analyses of family questions have a tendency to focus on the important changes that have occurred and on the differences in experience across various family types. For persons at mid-life, however, it is important to appreciate the commonality of family experience. Between the ages of 30 and 54, the majority of persons are married, live in two-generation nuclear families, are parents and are working.

While this basic pattern is strong, it is also true that there are increasing numbers who are not following it: 23% of persons at mid-life are neither married nor cohabiting and 35% are not living with children. While most people are working, 14% are not doing paid work and another 24% are working part time or part of the year.

It is especially among persons who have never married and particularly among the youngest of them that gender differences have declined. For instance, among never-married persons aged 30-34 who are neither living with a spouse nor with children, 66% of men and 72% of women are working full time and the average employment income of women represents 94% of the average income of men. Clearly this represents a small proportion of persons at mid-life.

Conversely, gender differences in work patterns and individual income are highest in the largest category of persons, that is among those who are legally married. For persons aged 30-34 who are living with a spouse and with children under 15 years of age, 81% of men and 35% of women are working full time and the average employment income of women is only 49% of men's. The income differences also remain strong for married persons working full time, where the average employment income of married women living with children under 15 years of age is 64% of that of men in the same circumstance.

In some ways the formerly married are intermediate between these two patterns; for instance, their likelihood of working full time is between that of the never married and the currently married. However, the presence of children, which is much more common for women than for men among the formerly married, seriously accentuates gender differences in this category. For instance, among persons aged 30-54 who were formerly married, 22% of men and 64% of women are living with children. Among the formerly married living with children under 15 years of age, 66% of men and 46% of women are working full time but, for all employment statuses, the average employment income of women represents only 66% that of men. In contrast, among the formerly married who are not living with children, 65% of men and 56% of women are working full time and, for all employment statuses, the average employment income of women is 75% of men's.

Consequently, it could be argued that gender differences for the never married are not serious. For the married, these differences are largely a function of the division of paid and unpaid work within couples. Many couples accommodate the needs of their families by sharing paid work in the labour force and unpaid family work rather unequally, but when one adds both categories, the lives of men and women are not that different. For instance, using data from the 1992 General Social Survey, Che-Alford and associates found that, among persons who are employed, live with a partner, and have at least one child under five years of age, men work an average of 9.4 hours per day compared to 9.8 hours for women. Men do more paid work (6.8 hours per day compared to women's 5.2), while women do more unpaid work (4.6 hours per day compared to men's 2.6). While the gender differences in total hours of work are not large, they show women in most situations doing more than men, except in the case of women not employed outside the home. These observations are important in terms of interpreting the persistence of the gender gap in society. They suggest that the major factor in this gap involves norms and behaviour with regard to marriage and parenthood, rather than differential treatment by employers and the work place.

### **Implications of Family and Work Patterns: The Problems of Discontinuity**

While couples may establish a division of labour that works for them, it is largely at the expense of the continuity of women's employment. Basing her finding on the 1984 Family History Survey, Robinson in 1989 has noted that marriage increases the number of labour-force interruptions for women while it decreases it for men. Le Bourdais and Desrosiers in 1988 further conclude that, while young women may have shorter work interruptions than older cohorts of women, by any given age their work patterns are just as discontinuous. These authors further speculate that some women may be choosing occupations that permit more work interruptions; these may also give less credit to experience and acquired human capital.

In one sense, as Jones and associates in 1990 suggest, withdrawals from the labour force or working part time can be seen as signs of a flexibility that permits people to achieve a variety of objectives. In particular, these work patterns often permit couples to look after the needs of children and families. The 1988 Child Care Survey suggests that, while parents would like further public support through day care, they are also interested in flexibility around work that would permit the parents themselves to look after their own children.

In another sense, work interruptions present problems. Moen in 1991, using data over a decade from the United States, finds that women aged 35-59 have considerable movement into and out of the labour force. While a small

proportion have never been employed at all, fewer than 20% were employed full time over the 10-year period: their most common experience involved changes in work status (full time, part time, not working). It would appear that work interruptions, including working part time, are a significant factor in the lower average income of women (Royal Commission on the Economic Union, 1985: II, 624-30).

While work interruptions are a way for couples to accommodate the needs of children and families, they pose serious problems for the formerly married. Clearly there is not the potential in this group to share paid and non-paid work with a spouse, even unequally. Especially when children are young, they face the pressure of combining paid work and family work. In addition, paid work may provide less benefit because of previous interruptions. Clearly this is a problem that mostly affects women. The employment income of women at mid-life who are lone parents of children under 15 represents only 70% of the employment income of men in the same circumstances. In addition, women make up 75% of lone parents aged 30-54 of children under 15. According to Rashid, lower-income groups are dominated by female-headed lone-parent families. While the increasing ease of moving out of an unsatisfactory relationship gives adults more autonomy, it is at the cost of more poverty for women and more insecurity for children (Cherlin, 1992:139).

### **Implications for Inequality**

The larger proportion of persons at mid-life who are not in a relationship means that there are fewer family supports, even at mid-life. The significant number who are not living with children also accentuates the inequality between persons who are and who are not caring for children.

Clearly, marriage and especially children bring more gender differences between the family and work parts of people's lives. For the most part, they bring more family responsibilities for women and more responsibilities for paid work for men. For instance, Grindstaff in 1989, studying women aged 30 at the time of the 1981 census, found that those who had married early or had children early were disadvantaged in terms of education, occupation and income. Those who had achieved the most were women who were either not married or had no children by age 30.

Conversely, women who give priority to paid work are those most likely to have children later in life or not to have children. For instance, Ram and Rahim in 1993 show that women entering employment early space children more and have fewer births. It may be that childlessness is the easiest route to equality. In terms of marriage and family patterns, the easiest route to equality is to be single and childless. This is a function of two factors: women without a spouse and without children are more attached to the labour

force and earn more than other women, while men without spouse and children are less attached to work than other men. Being childless involves more choice with regard to work; it would appear that women tend to choose more work involvement but men choose less, resulting in a convergence of patterns. However, while childlessness may be the easiest route to equality, there is not an increase in childlessness, implying that this is not a favoured solution to the conflict between work and children.

In the United States, Goldscheider and Waite (1986) find that men who have higher achieved status are more likely to get married; it is as if they are “buying marriage” as part of their status. However, this is not the case for women. Women with higher status are more likely not to marry; it is as if they are using their higher status to “buy out” of marriage. Clearly, men and women have different stakes in marriage.

The commonality of family experience of persons at mid-life has a certain equalizing effect. However, the increasing number who are outside the common pattern is an important source of stress and inequality. Families are not always available as sources of support for individuals; in particular, children often do not have the support of two parents.

Marriage and children bring considerable inequality between women and men in patterns of paid work and family work. While this creates the flexibility by which couples are able to look after the needs of families and children, the accentuation of gender differences poses serious problems in the family life of the formerly married.





## **Chapter 3**

### **FAMILIES IN LATER LIFE**

**Ellen M. Gee**

#### **Introduction**

The first two chapters examined the family patterns of adults up to the age of 55; the focus now shifts to persons aged 55 and over. The major characteristics of family life analyzed are marital status, parental status and living arrangements, along with the life course events of departure of children, marital dissolution and remarriage.

Typically, overviews of families focus on young adults. For example, Sweet and Bumpass, in their 1987 U.S. Census monograph on the family, devote only one of eleven chapters to families in later life, and Cherlin in 1992, in his widely-cited book on marriage in the United States, examines older persons only from the point of view of their marriage and family characteristics in young adulthood.

However, three interrelated factors are leading to a greater emphasis on families in later life and the family experiences of older persons. One is demographic aging. Declines in fertility and mortality in Canada have created an age structure in which, in 1991, more than 5.5 million Canadians — 20.4 percent of the population — are aged 55 and over (Table 3.1). And most of these people are embedded in families of three or four generations.

A second factor is feminist influences in the social sciences and in the wider society. As shown in Table 3.1, in the first half of this century there were more men than women aged 55 and over, the result of male-dominated immigration and higher female mortality, particularly maternal mortality, than today. However, since mid-century the older Canadian population has included an ever larger proportion of women due to their greater longevity. This is particularly evident among the oldest old; for example, in 1991 there were 44 men for every 100 women aged 85 and over. The feminization of the older population, together with a growing awareness of the economic plight of older women, particularly older unattached women, have led to a feminist-oriented focus on older women and, given the important functions women perform in the family throughout their lives, on their family circumstances.

A third factor is the growing prominence of the life-course perspective in the social sciences. As in Hareven in 1982, Elder in 1985 and Hagestad

**Table 3.1 Composition of the Population Aged 55 and Over, by Age Group, Sex and Sex Ratios<sup>1</sup>, Canada, 1921 to 1991<sup>2</sup>**

	Age Group				
	55-64	65-74	75-84	85 +	Total 55 +
<b>1921</b>					
Males	275,362	151,624	53,870	9,470	490,326
Females	245,705	138,596	55,380	11,304	450,985
Sex Ratio	112	109	97	84	109
Percent of Total Population	5.9	3.3	1.2	0.2	10.7
<b>1931</b>					
Males	356,315	209,400	73,937	11,213	650,865
Females	305,632	193,507	73,924	14,095	587,158
Sex Ratio	117	108	100	80	111
Percent of Total Population	6.4	3.9	1.4	0.1	11.9
<b>1941</b>					
Males	493,791	273,669	101,283	15,957	884,700
Females	420,252	251,156	105,926	19,824	797,158
Sex Ratio	117	109	96	80	111
Percent of Total Population	7.9	4.6	1.8	0.3	14.6
<b>1951</b>					
Males	556,888	388,474	140,093	22,736	1,108,191
Females	519,954	360,095	145,089	29,786	1,054,924
Sex Ratio	107	108	97	76	105
Percent of Total Population	7.7	5.3	2.0	0.4	15.4
<b>1961</b>					
Males	654,714	435,761	203,232	35,124	1,328,831
Females	634,756	453,516	217,822	45,699	1,351,793
Sex Ratio	103	96	93	77	98
Percent of Total Population	7.1	4.9	2.3	0.4	14.7
<b>1971</b>					
Males	854,105	501,625	225,675	54,565	1,635,970
Females	877,635	575,710	304,005	82,825	1,840,175
Sex Ratio	97	87	74	66	89
Percent of Total Population	8.0	5.0	2.5	0.6	16.1
<b>1981</b>					
Males	1,030,770	671,810	275,410	63,630	2,041,620
Females	1,128,460	805,940	414,035	130,155	2,478,590
Sex Ratio	91	83	67	49	82
Percent of Total Population	8.9	6.1	2.8	0.8	18.6
<b>1991</b>					
Males	1,180,025	851,455	392,665	86,305	2,510,450
Females	1,219,605	1,043,615	598,900	197,030	3,059,150
Sex Ratio	97	82	66	44	82
Percent of Total Population	8.8	6.9	3.6	1.0	20.4

<sup>1</sup> Number of males per 100 females.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes Newfoundland prior to 1951.

Source: 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-310, Table 1.

in 1990, this perspective draws attention to the transitions that occur from one state to another throughout people's lives, transitions dependent on the wider social structure and historical change. While the life-course perspective embodies a longitudinal approach that concentrates on the occurrence, timing and sequencing of events or transitions (as exemplified in Chapter 4), Pruchno and associates in 1984 have noted that it also draws attention to intergenerational aspects. When a man marries, his parents assume the role of parents-in-law; when a woman becomes a mother, her mother becomes a grandmother; when a husband dies, his children lose a father. Thus, the life-course perspective broadens the family's horizon beyond the unit of parent or parents and dependent child or children, i.e., the nuclear family, to a consideration of family structure and interaction patterns among older persons.

These three influences (demographic aging, feminist perspectives and the life-course perspective) have led not only to a greater emphasis on the family life of older persons, they have also created an awareness of significant gender differences in family life and family experience, differences that often increase with age according to Gee and Kimball in 1987. Thus, a major organizing theme in this chapter is gender difference: the degree and type of differences between men and women in their family experiences, the factors accounting for them and their implications.

## **Marital Status of the Population Aged 55 and Over**

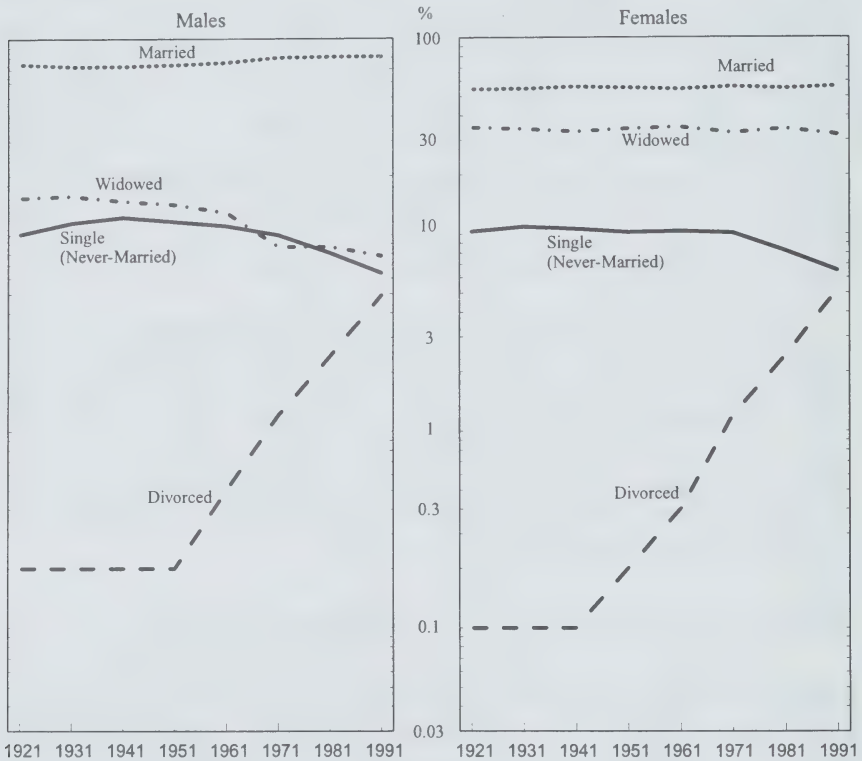
A considerable body of gerontological research indicates that marital status in later life makes a difference. Several examples can be cited. Bengtson and associates in 1990 have noted that married older persons have better health and more economic and social resources than those who are unmarried. Martin Matthews in 1991 points out that widowhood is an event with such serious economic consequences, particularly for women, that much of its negative effect appears to stem from the loss of socio-economic status rather than a spouse. Martin Matthews in 1991 and Payne in 1994 have observed that divorced and separated older persons fare somewhat worse than the widowed in well-being, social support, and economic status, while Keith in 1986 has noted that the never married women rely more on friends for social support than is the case for the previously married who are not now married. Without losing sight of the heterogeneity within each marital status, it is nonetheless true that marital status is very useful for classifying people in later life.

## **The Distribution of Marital Statuses, 1921 to 1991**

In earlier chapters, an account was given of how people were classified in terms of marital status in the censuses of Canada from 1921 to 1991, and how the categories have changed. In this section, a classification into four



**Figure 3.1 Legal Marital Status of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex, Canada, 1921 to 1991**



Source: Table A3.1.

marital statuses is used: single (never married), married (including separated), widowed, and divorced (Figure 3.1). The married category predominates for the entire period 1921 to 1991. As expected, the percent married decreases with age at any one time as mortality increases widowhood. Figure 3.1 also shows that, over time, the proportion married increases somewhat as declining mortality postpones widowhood to later ages.

The widowed form the second most numerous marital status. Age variation in the percent widowed is evident, but there is an overall downward trend, especially among men, in the last seventy years.

The single (never-married) category is a distant third: rarely does the proportion exceed 11% or 12%. Also, the proportion single has decreased

quite substantially since 1921, particularly after 1971, from about 10% to 6.5% of the total. Thus, it is important to note that the turning away from first marriage, observed in Chapters 1 and 2, has not yet appeared in the older Canadian population.

Formerly, the divorced were a very small proportion of the population aged 55 and over, less than 1%. However, a substantial increase has occurred since 1971 with the liberalization of Canadian divorce law: the percentage divorced has quadrupled, so that now approximately 5% of older Canadians are divorced. While all age groups of 55 and over have experienced increases, the trend is particularly evident in the younger age groups, i.e., those aged 55-59 and 60-64.

A major pattern observed in Figure 3.1 is the substantial gender difference in the distribution of marital statuses in later life. Men are much more likely to be married: in 1921, 74% and, by 1991, 81%. In contrast, only 55% of women are married in 1921 and 56% in 1991. The smaller increase in the percentage married of women aged 55 and over is due, in part, to disproportionate growth in the number of very old women (Table 3.1).

### **Age and Gender Variations in Marital Status**

The gender difference in the proportion married increases with age. For example, within the age group 55-59, 84% of men and 75% of women were married in 1991. However, at ages 85 and over, the comparable figures are 57% and 12% respectively. That is, even among the oldest men, more than one-half are married.

Women are much more likely to be widowed than men. For men aged 55 and over, the proportion widowed decreased from 16% in 1921 to 8% in 1991. In contrast, the proportion widowed among women aged 55 and over changed very little over this period, from 35% in 1921 to 32% in 1991. As with the married, this relatively small change among women is partly a result of the changing age distribution of older women relative to men. Within each five-year age group, the percentage of widows declines quite substantially, especially for ages below 70, but this is counterbalanced by a proportionately larger increase in the number of very old women than in that of very old men.

For both women and men, the proportion widowed increases with age. Nevertheless, the sex difference at even the oldest ages (85+) is very large; in 1991, 35% of men and 77% of women were widowed.

Gender differences in the proportion never married are small, and they do not follow a clear pattern. Similarly, the gender difference in the percentage divorced is not large; both men and women appear to be sharing in the trend of an increasing proportion divorced.

**Table 3.2 Percentage of Previously Married People Experiencing Remarriages, and Median Age at Remarriage, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1990**

	Birth Cohorts		
	1911-1920 (Aged 70-79)	1921-1930 (Aged 60-69)	1931-1940 (Aged 50-59)
Percentage Median Age	Males		
	38.1	49.7	44.8
	53.3	51.2	40.7
	Females		
Percentage Median Age	18.4	23.7	35.9
	54.8	43.6	37.8

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

Overall, the same trends in legal marital status occur for men and women: declines in the percentage never married and widowed, a slight increase in the percentage married, and a large increase in the percentage divorced. Despite these similarities in trends, the overall distribution of marital status varies considerably by gender. The major difference lies in the likelihood of being a widow or widower, the combined result of women's higher longevity, the age differences at marriage, and a higher incidence of remarriage among men.

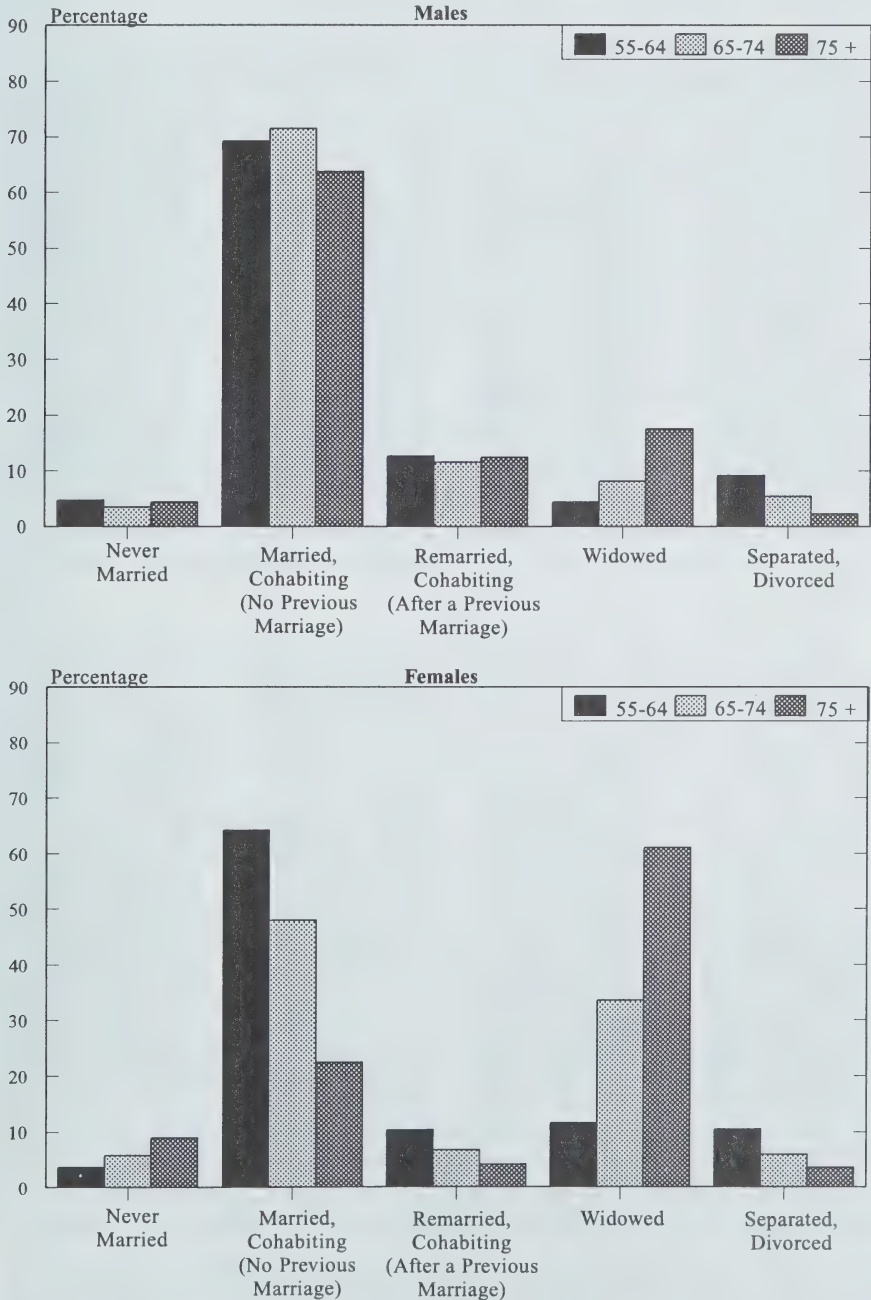
The data on legal marital status give only a partial picture since they combine the married and the separated and they do not include information on cohabitation. However, there is little difference between the distributions of legal and actual marital status among older Canadians (table not shown). Levels of both separation and cohabitation are low, and each essentially cancels out the effect of the other on the total proportion married. For instance, only 3% of men and 1% of women aged 55 and over are currently living in a common-law union.

## Remarriage

Another element involved in the portrayal of current marital status is the distinction between first and subsequent unions (both legal and common-law). While the 1991 census does not provide information on this, the 1990 General Social Survey allows an estimate of the proportion of persons who are currently married or cohabiting with no previous marriage and the proportion who have remarried or who are cohabiting after a previous marriage (Figure 3.2). It can be observed that remarriage is not common in later life. Only 12% of men and 8% of women aged 55 and over are remarried, or cohabiting after a previous marriage. This is in keeping with Burch's finding in 1985, based on the 1984 Family History Survey, that the vast majority of Canadians who marry do so only once.

Men are nearly twice as likely to be remarried as women, and in the population aged 75 and over, the ratio is three to one. Table 3.2 provides estimates of the proportion who have remarried among persons whose previous marriage had ended. Men are more than twice as likely to remarry as women in the two older cohorts; for the younger cohort (1931-40), the

**Figure 3.2 Marital Status of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990**



Source: Table A3.2.



gender difference is less pronounced. The median age at remarriage tends to be younger for women than for men: this reflects, in part, the fact that women lose their spouse at a younger age than men.

This observation is consistent with that of Dumas and Péron in 1992, that the probability that men aged 60 and over will remarry is approximately four times that of women. The lower rate of remarriage among older women is, in part, due to unequal sex ratios indicating a small number of men at advanced ages due to higher male mortality. However, this demographic fact must not be allowed to obscure the possibility of a gender difference in the desire to remarry. As Burch has stated in 1990, "more likely some of these older Canadians simply have not been highly motivated to remarry". The fact that median ages at remarriage are below 55 adds credence to this argument.

### **Other Variations in Marital Status**

The overall trends in marital status and the pronounced age and gender differences hold, in a general way, for all sub-populations within Canada. However, social, economic and cultural variations in marriage patterns do exist. Here, variations on three dimensions will be examined: mother tongue, educational attainment and individual annual income (Figures 3.3 and 3.4 and Table 3.3).

Persons with French mother tongue stand out as having a lower proportion legally married than persons with other mother tongues. This is due to a relatively high proportion of people who have never married, especially among women, and a higher incidence of cohabitation. Also, Burch points out that remarriage is less common in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada.

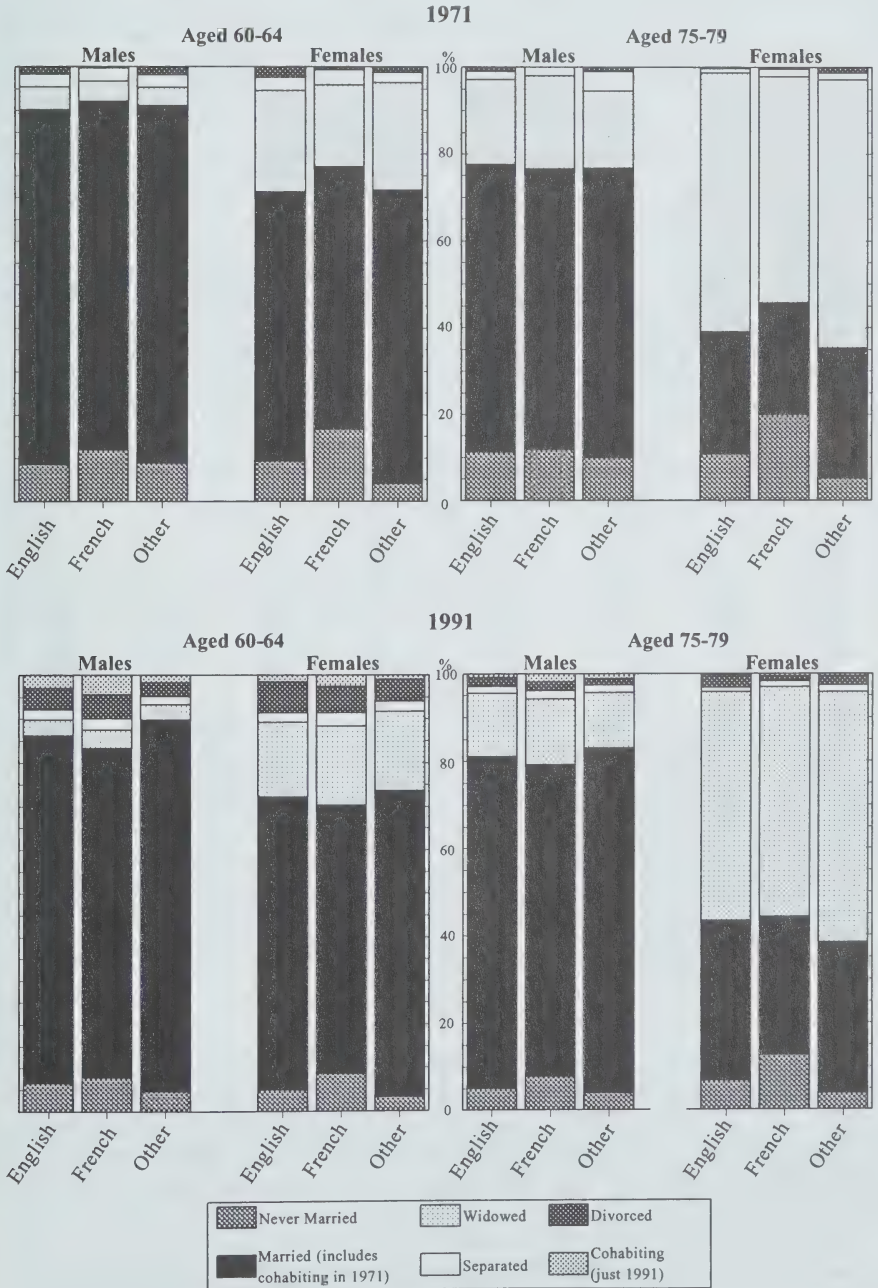
Differentials in marital status by educational attainment are much more pronounced for women than for men. Women with at least some university education are significantly more likely to remain single. For example, in 1991, 18% of women aged 75-79 with some university education had never married; the comparable figure for women with only some elementary education is 5%. Also, divorce is twice as common among older women with some university education (4%) compared to women with a low level of educational attainment (2%). The percentage cohabiting decreases with increasing education among women, and among men as well.

The relationship between individual annual income and marital status, among the unmarried only,<sup>1</sup> illustrates important gender variations (Figure 3.4). For men, having never married is associated with low income; for women, the reverse is the case. This is especially so for the younger age

---

<sup>1</sup> The analysis is limited to the unmarried population, given the difficulty in interpreting the meaning of individual income for persons in a marital union.

**Figure 3.3 Marital Status of Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Age, Sex and Mother Tongue, Canada, 1971 and 1991**



Source: Table A3.3.

**Table 3.3 Marital Status of Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Sex and Educational Attainment<sup>1</sup>, Canada, 1981 and 1991**

	Aged 60-64				Aged 75-79			
	Elementary	Secondary	Post Secondary Non-university	University	Elementary	Secondary	Post Secondary Non-university	University
<b>1981</b>								
<b>Males</b>								
Never Married	9.7	5.2	3.9	8.1	8.8	6.2	4.0	8.2
Married <sup>2</sup>	78.6	85.5	88.2	84.8	71.1	74.4	76.7	74.6
Widowed	5.1	4.2	2.4	2.6	16.7	15.9	16.2	14.7
Separated	3.8	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.6	1.4
Divorced	2.9	2.7	3.1	2.6	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.1
<b>Females</b>								
Never Married	6.1	5.1	8.2	17.1	6.7	10.6	17.7	20.9
Married <sup>2</sup>	64.6	69.0	69.3	59.2	30.8	29.5	31.3	30.5
Widowed	24.4	20.7	16.0	15.7	60.2	57.8	48.2	44.6
Separated	2.7	1.9	2.4	2.5	1.4	1.0	1.2	2.4
Divorced	2.2	3.3	4.1	5.5	0.9	1.5	1.6	1.6
<b>1991</b>								
<b>Males</b>								
Never Married	8.5	5.4	3.7	6.5	6.6	3.8	3.8	6.2
Married	76.4	81.3	81.7	82.1	72.2	78.0	80.1	79.0
Cohabiting	3.5	2.9	3.2	2.4	1.4	1.1	1.2	0.7
Widowed	4.2	3.8	3.8	2.2	16.2	13.4	12.1	10.6
Separated	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.6
Divorced	4.8	4.4	5.2	4.5	1.9	2.3	1.2	1.8
<b>Females</b>								
Never Married	4.2	4.5	5.8	13.6	5.2	6.8	9.4	18.0
Married	64.3	69.2	66.7	61.3	31.9	37.7	36.7	37.1
Cohabiting	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.0	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.1
Widowed	21.7	16.4	15.4	12.2	59.0	51.3	50.3	40.0
Separated	2.7	2.3	2.8	2.5	1.4	1.1	0.8	0.8
Divorced	5.2	6.0	7.6	9.3	1.9	2.6	2.6	3.8

<sup>1</sup> Persons with "some" elementary, secondary, post secondary non-university and university education, respectively.

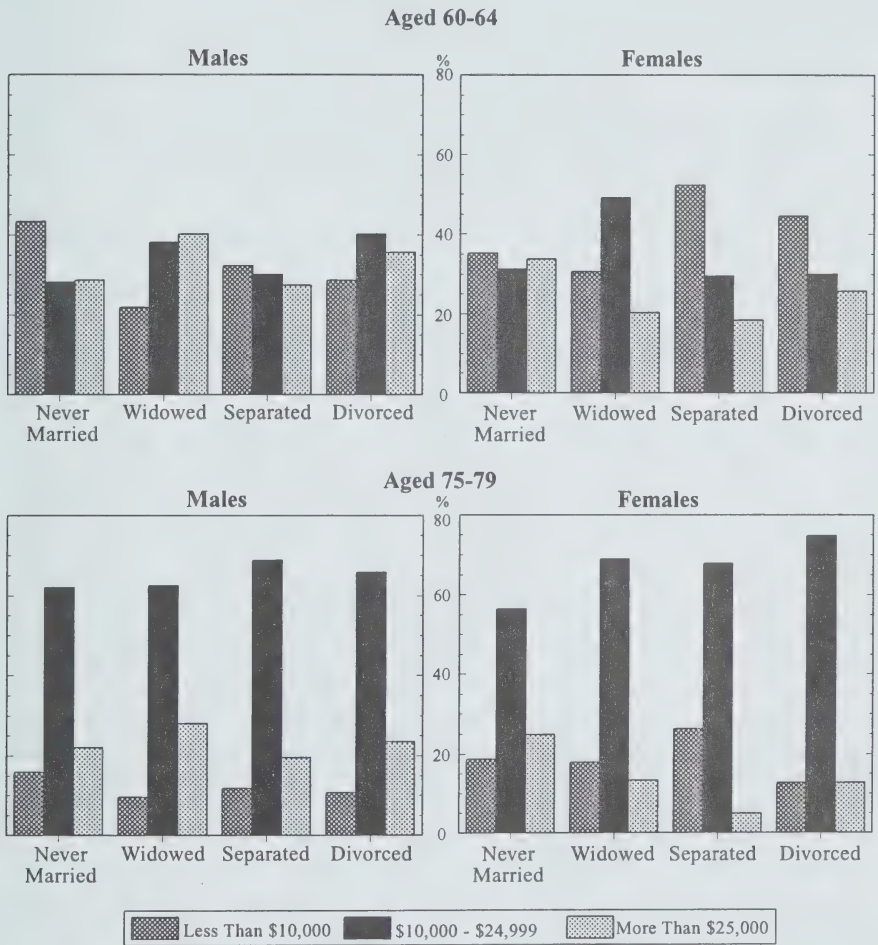
<sup>2</sup> Includes cohabiting persons.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

group (60-64); 43% of single men have incomes below \$10,000, the highest percentage among the four unmarried groups of men. In contrast, 35% of single women have incomes below \$10,000, but this is by no means the unmarried group of women with the highest percentage below this level.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that women who have never married have the highest proportion with high income (34%).

<sup>2</sup> The gender difference in income among those who have never married in the age group 75-79 is less pronounced. It is suspected that a disproportionate number of never-married men with low income die before reaching this age.

**Figure 3.4 Income (in 1990 Dollars) of Unmarried People Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Sex, Canada, 1991**



Source: Table A3.4.

Among the previously married (the widowed, separated and divorced), different gender patterns exist. Figure 3.4 shows that, for all three groups of the previously married and for both age groups, a higher percentage of men than women have incomes in the mid (\$10,000-\$24,999) and high range (\$25,000 and up). For the purposes of this analysis, however, another gender difference observed in Table 3.7 is perhaps more important. For previously-married men, marital status has little effect on income; whether they are widowed, separated or divorced, the distribution of income varies little among



**Table 3.4 Ever-Married Women Aged 55 and Over by Age Group, Showing Number of Children Ever Born, Canada, 1941-1991**

Age Group	Ever-Married Women (In Thousands)	Children Ever Born (Percent)							Average Number of Children	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6 +		
	1941 <sup>1</sup>									
	55-64	374.5	13.2	11.2	13.5	12.3	10.4	8.2	31.2	4.4
	65 +	328.2	12.8	9.2	11.1	10.9	10.0	8.6	37.4	4.8
	1961									
	55-59	292.6	15.5	15.0	19.0	14.4	9.9	6.8	19.4	} 3.5
	60-64	247.0	14.6	13.7	17.5	14.3	10.2	7.5	22.2	
	65 +	587.0	13.0	12.1	15.5	13.8	10.8	8.1	26.7	
	1971									
	55-59	438.3	14.5	14.8	21.8	16.7	10.9	6.9	14.3	3.0
	60-64	356.0	16.6	15.9	20.6	14.7	9.9	6.5	15.8	3.1
	65-69	289.1	16.7	15.4	19.0	14.2	10.0	6.8	18.0	3.2
	70 +	569.4	14.1	13.3	16.8	14.2	10.6	7.8	23.3	3.7
	1981									
	55-59	571.6	9.6	10.8	21.5	19.5	13.9	8.8	15.9	3.4
	60-64	477.2	11.5	12.5	22.0	18.0	12.4	7.8	15.7	3.3
	65-69	410.7	14.0	14.3	21.8	16.6	11.0	7.0	15.2	3.1
	70 +	708.1	14.9	15.0	19.7	14.9	10.1	6.9	18.4	3.3
	1991									
	55-59	584.2	7.9	8.7	22.7	23.1	16.3	9.3	12.1	3.2
	60-64	565.8	8.8	9.4	21.1	20.5	15.5	9.6	15.1	3.9
65-69	539.3	10.0	10.6	21.5	19.4	14.0	8.7	15.9	3.4	
70 +	1015.0	13.2	13.8	21.7	17.0	11.5	7.3	15.5	3.2	

<sup>1</sup> Excludes women for whom age at first marriage was not stated. Excludes Newfoundland.

**Sources:** Census of Canada: 1941, Volume 3, Table 51. 1961: Catalogue No. 98-507, Bulletin 4, 1-7, Table 61. 1971: Catalogue No. 92-718, Table 24. 1981: Catalogue No. 92-906, Tables 1 and 2. 1991: Catalogue No. 93-931, Table 1.

them.<sup>3</sup> However, for previously-married women, marital status makes a difference in both the younger and older age categories. The data show that separated women have the largest percentage with low income (under \$10,000), followed by the divorced, and then widows.<sup>4</sup> Thus, for previously-married older women, which is the majority of older women, the particular way in which they become previously married affects their economic situation.

<sup>3</sup> Although divorced men aged 60-64 have somewhat lower income than separated men and even lower income than widowed men.

<sup>4</sup> The income disadvantage of widows is somewhat blurred in the data relating to the age group 60-64, since widows of this age are eligible for an income-tested income security benefit, the Spouse's Allowance.

## **Parental Status of the Population Aged 55 and Over**

All women and virtually all men have completed their reproductive careers by the age of 55. However, parental status, whether one has children and how many, is important since children are key players in the support systems of older persons. Also, according to Aronson in 1991, McDaniel in 1992 and Townson in 1994, the issue of children's availability to provide care to frail parents has important social-policy implications in the present context of an increasing emphasis on community and family care.

### **Children Ever Born, 1941 to 1991**

The following focuses mainly on the number of children that women have had, using data from the censuses of 1941 and of 1961 to 1991. The data in Table 3.4 reflect the Canadian fertility trends of the 20th century clearly, save for one, the recent baby bust.

The high fertility at the end of the 19th century and during the early years of the 20th century are reflected in the data for 1941, when the average number of children ever born is in the range of 4.4 to 4.8 per woman. The reduction in fertility during the Great Depression is visible in the low average births, around 3, for women aged 55-59 and 60-64 in 1971, 65-69 in 1981, and 70 or over in 1991. The high fertility of the baby boom is reflected particularly in the data for women aged 60-69 in 1991. The major decline in Canadian fertility, occurring especially since 1971, is too recent to be reflected in the childbearing of older women in 1991. Even the youngest women here, those aged 55-59 in 1991, had on average more than three children each. Thus, today's elderly have relatively large numbers of children, but this will not be the case for the elderly in the near future.

While considerable variation remains, there is some convergence over time in the number of children that women have. For example, comparing women aged 55-64 in 1941 with women aged 55-59 in 1991, the proportion of women bearing no children or just one child decreases from nearly a quarter in 1941 to 17% in 1991, and the proportion bearing 6 or more children decreases even more, from 31% to 12%. Concomitantly, an increasing proportion of women have had either two or three children.

### **Childlessness**

Trends in childlessness are particularly noteworthy. In the past, a high proportion of married women did not bear any children; in the data for 1941, 1961 and 1971, the proportion of childless ever-married women aged 55 and over is in the 13 % to 16% range (Table 3.4). These high levels are due to various factors: physiological causes, voluntary childlessness, and higher levels of marital dissolution due to the early death of a husband.

It is only in the 1950s with the baby-boom mothers that a notable decrease in childlessness occurs; indeed, a low level of childlessness is a distinguishing feature of the Canadian baby boom. Historically, a significant minority of Canadian women have remained childless into later life; the women who produced the baby boom — women who are now joining the ranks of the elderly — have an unusually low level of childlessness. It is difficult to say what proportion of the women who are young today will enter later life without bearing any children; it will likely be higher than that of the baby-boom mothers but it may not be higher than that of the generations of Canadian women who preceded them.

### **Variations in Children Ever Born**

The major predictor of number of children ever born is marital status (Table 3.5). As one would expect, only a small proportion of women who have never married have borne children. However, the fertility of never-married women varies with age; the youngest (aged 55-59 at the time of the 1991 census) are less likely to be childless, and they report a rate of childbearing approximately triple that of the oldest women (aged 70 or over at the time of the census), although the data are of uncertain trustworthiness.

Differences in the number of children ever born among those who are or have been married are not large, but two patterns are worthy of note. First, divorced women in all age groups have borne fewer children than women in any other ever-married group, which could be explained by the lower fertility of highly educated women if divorced women have higher levels of education (Tables 3.3 and 3.6). Second, the effect of widowhood on the number of children that women bear varies across cohorts. Among women aged 70 and over, widowhood is associated with a smaller number of children; among younger women, the effect cannot be observed. This pattern shows the impact of declining mortality: in the past, a husband was more likely to die young enough to curtail his wife's childbearing; more recently, men's deaths have been concentrated at older ages, after a spouse's reproductive years.

Variations in the childbearing of ever-married women aged 60-64 and 75-79 according to their cultural and socio-economic characteristics are presented in Table 3.6. The historical pattern of high fertility among Francophone women (a pattern that has subsequently disappeared) is still evident in these older age groups. Older women in the Atlantic provinces display similarly high fertility. Place of birth seems also to be related to fertility, with women born in Canada displaying an intermediate level of fertility, higher than that of women born in Europe and elsewhere in North America, but lower than that of women born in other parts of the world. The number of children women have ever borne shows strong differences by their

**Table 3.5 Women Aged 55 and Over by Number of Children Ever Born, by Five-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991**

Marital Status	Number of Women (In Thousands)	Children Ever Born (Percent)						Average Number of Children		
		0	1	2	3	4	5+			
55-59	Never Married	32.1	86.6	6.5	2.4	1.4	0.9	2.2	0.3	
	Married <sup>1</sup>	455.6	7.7	8.2	23.2	23.8	16.5	20.6	3.2	
	Widowed	62.2	8.0	9.4	20.1	20.1	16.2	26.3	3.5	
	Separated	18.2	7.5	10.0	20.4	20.3	16.1	25.6	3.4	
	Divorced	48.2	9.2	11.5	21.8	22.3	14.7	20.5	3.1	
	60-64	Never Married	33.7	90.3	4.3	1.7	0.9	0.8	2.0	0.3
		Married <sup>1</sup>	407.4	8.8	8.9	21.5	21.1	15.8	23.9	3.3
		Widowed	105.0	8.5	10.1	19.9	18.5	14.4	28.5	3.6
		Separated	15.5	7.6	11.5	18.3	19.6	15.8	27.1	3.5
		Divorced	37.9	10.7	12.1	21.1	19.2	15.1	21.8	3.1
65-69	Never Married	32.7	91.9	3.7	1.5	0.6	0.6	1.6	0.2	
	Married <sup>1</sup>	343.1	10.1	10.2	22.0	19.9	14.3	23.4	3.3	
	Widowed	158.0	9.6	10.9	20.4	18.3	13.3	27.6	3.6	
	Separated	12.2	8.1	10.8	19.9	18.0	15.3	27.9	3.6	
	Divorced	26.0	12.2	14.3	21.6	18.8	12.8	20.3	3.0	
	70+	Never Married	85.4	94.8	2.3	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.1
		Married <sup>1</sup>	390.6	13.7	12.8	23.1	17.7	11.9	20.8	3.5
		Widowed	583.9	12.8	14.2	20.8	16.5	11.3	24.4	3.3
		Separated	14.8	11.1	14.1	19.6	16.3	11.8	27.1	3.5
		Divorced	25.7	15.8	18.9	23.0	16.6	10.7	15.0	2.6

<sup>1</sup> Includes women in cohabiting unions.

Source: 1991 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-321, Table 2.

level of education, with increases associated with lower fertility. Similarly, higher levels of individual income are associated with smaller numbers of children ever born.

Of the five variables presented in Table 3.6, education appears to be the one most clearly and strongly related to the fertility of older Canadian women. For example, among women aged 60-64 who have ever been married, those with only some elementary education average 3.8 children, with 37% bearing five or more; the comparable figures for those with at least some university



**Table 3.6 Average Number of Children Ever Born (per 1,000 Ever-Married Women) and Percent of Ever-Married Women with No and 5+ Children Ever Born, for Age Groups 60-64 and 75-79, Showing Mother Tongue, Place of Birth, Region or Place of Residence, Educational Attainment and Individual Income, Canada, 1991**

	Aged 60-64			Aged 75-79		
	Average Number of Children Ever Born	Percent with No Children Ever Born	Percent with 5+ Children Ever Born	Average Number of Children Ever Born	Percent with No Children Ever Born	Percent with 5+ Children Ever Born
<b>Mother Tongue<sup>1</sup></b>						
English	3.2	8.6	22.3	2.6	14.9	15.0
French	3.7	9.6	33.5	3.8	14.9	37.3
Other	3.2	7.9	22.4	3.1	9.8	22.8
<b>Place of Birth</b>						
Canada	3.4	8.8	27.1	3.0	14.8	21.8
Europe and North America	2.8	9.1	14.1	2.7	12.3	14.8
Other	4.0	6.6	38.4	4.0	5.8	38.9
<b>Region or Place of Residence</b>						
Atlantic <sup>2</sup>	4.0	6.4	36.6	3.6	8.8	33.9
Quebec	3.5	10.2	29.4	3.5	15.4	32.4
Ontario	3.1	8.7	20.5	2.6	14.1	15.1
West	3.3	8.0	23.9	2.8	13.0	16.5
<b>Educational Attainment<sup>3</sup></b>						
Elementary	3.8	7.3	35.3	3.6	11.6	31.5
Secondary	3.2	8.7	23.0	2.7	14.7	15.6
Post Secondary Non-university	3.0	10.0	17.3	2.3	16.3	8.8
University	2.8	11.2	13.6	2.4	19.1	12.0
<b>Individual Income</b>						
Less Than \$10,000	3.6	7.8	29.6	3.4	11.6	27.9
\$10,000-\$24,999	3.2	8.9	21.9	2.9	13.8	19.5
\$25,000-\$39,999	2.7	12.3	15.1	2.2	19.9	10.3
\$40,000-\$59,999	2.7	11.1	13.2	2.3	16.8	8.4
More Than \$60,000	2.9	9.8	13.5	2.0	34.1	10.1

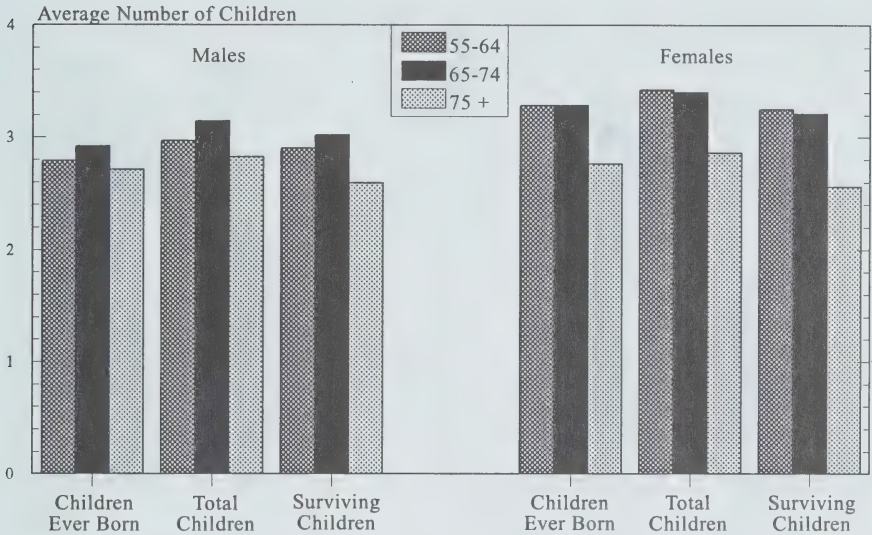
<sup>1</sup> Persons reporting both English and French on mother tongue are included in the French category.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes Prince Edward Island.

<sup>3</sup> Persons with "some" elementary, secondary, post secondary non-university and university education, respectively.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata File, 1991 Census of Canada.

**Figure 3.5 Average Number of Children Ever Born, Total Children and Surviving Children, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1990**



Source: Table A3.5.

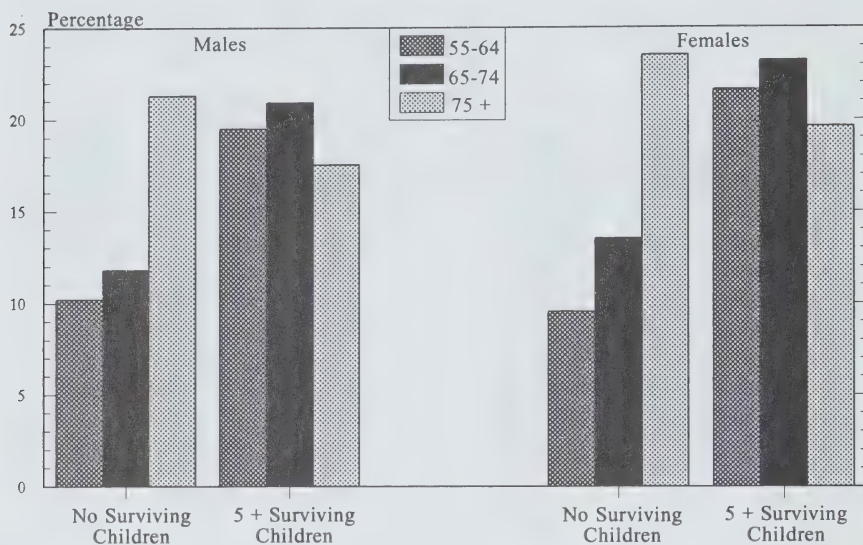
education are 2.8 children and 14%. However, all the variables in Table 3.6 show some relation to fertility. The childbearing of older Canadian women who have ever been married results from the joint action of cultural and economic factors in ways that no longer hold for women currently in their reproductive years (see Chapters 1 and 2). However, the consequences of these factors are important to today's older women and men, as they bear directly on the size of the pool of children available to them, a size that varies considerably more now than it will in the future.

### Surviving Children

As the previous sentence suggests, what is important about parental status at older ages is not the number of children ever born to women (or to ever-married women), but rather the number of surviving children available to both men and women.

Since reproduction is such an important aspect of demographic analysis, the measurement of parental status has focussed on women and childbearing. However, the 1990 General Social Survey contains questions about the number of biological children (equivalent to children ever born, but asked of both men and women), the number of stepchildren and adopted children, and the number of surviving children (Figure 3.5). The total number of

**Figure 3.6 Percentage of Population Aged 55 and Over with No Surviving Children and with 5 + Surviving Children, by Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1990**



Source: Table A3.6.

children (biological children, stepchildren and adopted children combined) is only slightly higher than the number of biological children alone, highlighting the fact that most older Canadians who have married have done so only once and that adoption has been minimal compared to biological parenthood.

The comparison of total number of children to surviving children indicates that the death of a child is rare, as is to be expected in a country with low mortality. However, as one grows older the risk of a child's dying increases. Overall, though, persons now aged 55 and over have a fairly substantial number of surviving children, an average of approximately three each.

However, averages often mask considerable variation, and this is the case with the average number of surviving children of people in later life. As Figure 3.6 shows, fairly high percentages of people have either no surviving children or five or more surviving children. The dispersion is particularly great within the population aged 75 and over, in which 21% of men and 24% of women have no surviving children, while 18% of men and 20% of women have five or more. This variation among persons most at risk of frail health has implications for elder-care policy: the assumption that most persons at the oldest ages have children to provide care is clearly untenable, since nearly one-quarter of older women do not.

## **Living Arrangements of the Population Aged 55 and Over**

Who lives with whom is a critical question in any discussion of family life. For older persons, it expands to encompass others, such as living alone and living in institutions. Thomas and Wister in 1984 have pointed out that these are important issues because of their direct relation to ties and support between the generations within families, to family cohesion, kinship obligations, age segregation and economic independence. This section therefore provides a descriptive account of the living arrangements of older Canadians, focussing on age and gender variations.

### **Living Arrangements, 1981 to 1991**

Table 3.7 provides an overview of the living arrangements of older Canadians in 1981 and 1991. Taking the population aged 55 and over as a whole, the most common arrangement is to live with close relatives (a parent or spouse, or a child who has not married), encompassing approximately 70% of men and 51% of women. Living alone is the second most common arrangement, including approximately 11% of men and a quarter of women. Living in a private household with non-relatives only is the least common arrangement.

While there is little change over the decade, clear variations in living arrangements by age and sex can be observed. With advancing age, the likelihood of living alone or in an institution increases substantially for both men and women, while the percentage of persons living with close relatives decreases. These age differences reflect the increasing physical frailty that comes with age, the increased risk of widowhood, and a combination of the two: the death of a spouse can mean the loss of the social and material support essential to living independently. To some degree, living with other relatives can compensate for the loss of a spouse; the percentage doing so, while small, increases with age. Living with non-relatives only is the one arrangement that does not vary with age, but it covers a small percentage of older persons.

Gender differences in living arrangements are striking. While age variations in living arrangements are similar for both women and men, the patterns are much more pronounced for women, particularly among those aged 75 or over.

These gender differences in living arrangements mean that the distribution by type of arrangement is considerably more diverse for women than for men. In 1991, even in the oldest age category, more than half (57%) of men live with close relatives only, 16% live alone and 13% live in an institution. In contrast, among women, the three major types of living arrangement are more equal: 22% live with close relatives only, 38% live alone and 24% live in institutions. Also, an additional 12% of women aged 75 and over in 1991



**Table 3.7 Percentage Distribution of Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1981 and 1991**

	Males				Females			
	55 +	55-64	65-74	75 +	55 +	55-64	65-74	75 +
<b>1981</b>								
Collective Household	4.3	2.1	3.3	13.2	6.3	1.4	3.9	20.2
Alone	10.6	8.3	11.5	15.7	24.4	14.6	30.0	36.6
Close Relatives Only <sup>1</sup>	69.3	74.5	69.8	52.6	51.0	67.7	47.6	21.3
Close Relatives and Other(s) <sup>2</sup>	9.1	10.1	8.8	6.5	6.6	9.0	5.7	2.8
Relatives <sup>3</sup>	4.3	2.8	4.3	9.0	9.3	5.0	10.3	16.8
Non-relatives Only	2.4	2.3	2.3	3.0	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.3
Total Number <sup>4</sup>	2,037	1,031	666	341	2,465	1,121	804	539
<b>1991</b>								
Collective Household	3.9	1.5	2.7	12.9	6.6	1.2	2.5	23.8
Alone	11.8	9.5	12.1	16.4	26.9	15.9	29.5	37.7
Close Relatives Only <sup>1</sup>	70.6	74.4	72.4	57.1	51.1	67.7	53.5	22.4
Close Relatives and Other(s) <sup>2</sup>	8.0	9.5	7.4	5.6	5.9	9.1	5.2	2.1
Relatives <sup>3</sup>	3.0	2.1	3.0	5.5	7.7	4.3	7.5	12.2
Non-relatives Only	2.7	3.0	2.5	2.5	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8
Total Number <sup>4</sup>	2,402	1,158	826	418	2,850	1,206	1,005	639

<sup>1</sup> Refers to census families, i.e. parent(s) and / or never-married child(ren).

<sup>2</sup> Refers to living arrangements including a census family (as defined above) and at least one other relative.

<sup>3</sup> Refers to living arrangements in which there is no census family (see above), but in which other relatives live together. Includes situations in which at least one non-relative may reside, as well.

<sup>4</sup> In thousands.

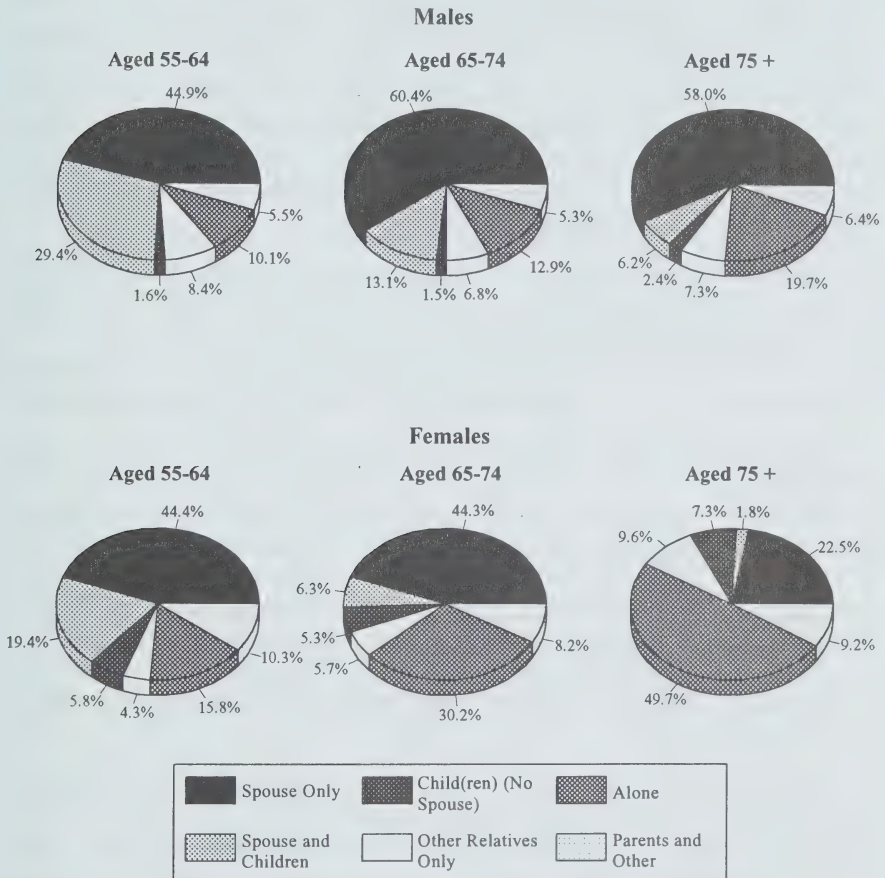
**Sources:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada and 1991 Census of Canada, special tabulation.

live with other relatives. Thus, while women enter the older ages at 55 in living arrangements much like those of men (i.e., the majority live with close relatives only), they are far more likely to change them as they age. This fact, that women far more than men are likely to make a significant change in living arrangements in old age, has policy implications for housing, social support and health.

### Multi-Generational Family Living Arrangements

A commonly-held belief is that multi-generational families are rare. Goode in 1963 has suggested that it reflects a nostalgic myth of a golden age of happy and harmonious extended families in the past, which disintegrated

**Figure 3.7 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1991**



Source: Table A3.7.

into present-day isolated, nuclear families. Research in the United States by Lee in 1980 and by Angel and Tienda in 1982 has reported few extended families, although later research, for example by Beck and Beck in 1989, has challenged the finding. Sometimes research on the increase in living alone among the aged, for example, that of Kotlikoff and Morris in 1990, seems to assume that this has been at the expense of living in a multi-generational family.

However, very little Canadian research has addressed the question of the frequency of multi-generational families.<sup>5</sup> How rare are they? Figure 3.7 provides some answers, but first it is necessary to specify how multi-

<sup>5</sup> A notable exception is the work of Bélard (1987) on families in Quebec.

generational living arrangements are being defined. The analysis is restricted to persons in private households: elderly people in institutions are not included. They include households in which a person or a couple is living with one or more of their children, regardless of the child's marital status. They also include households where someone is living with a parent or parents; in this case, children and a spouse may also be in the family. It should be noted that this definition yields a conservative estimate of the proportion of elderly persons in multi-generational families, since it omits arrangements not involving the direct parent-child relationship (for example, living in the same family as a grandchild or niece).

Figure 3.7 shows that nearly 17% of women and 22% of men aged 55 and over in private households live in a household involving at least two generations. While these percentages are small compared with arrangements involving a spouse only (40% and 53% respectively) and somewhat less than the percentage of women living alone (29%), they are far from inconsequential.

The frequency of multi-generational living varies with age: as age increases, the likelihood of living in a multi-generational family decreases for both men and women. As shown in Figure 3.7, the percentage of men with this arrangement decreases from 32% for ages 55-64 to 9% for ages 75 and over. For women, the comparable figures are 26% and 9%. The high percentages for persons aged 55-64 are due to many living with a spouse and a child or children. Some of this may be due to the cluttered-nest phenomenon. The greater decline with age of the percentage living with a spouse and child among women is largely a result of their greater likelihood of widowhood.

In contrast to the overall pattern of a declining frequency of multi-generational living arrangements with age, an increase can be observed in the category of those living with a child or children but not with a spouse. This is more the case for women, where 7% of women aged 75 and over are living with at least one child and no husband. This suggests that at least some aged Canadians do choose to live with their children when they are left with no spouse. While what Rosenmayr and Kockeis in 1963 call "intimacy at a distance" may be preferred by the majority of elderly Canadians, a not insignificant minority, especially of aged women, live with their children.

Unlike many of the topics addressed in this text, the data on multi-generational living arrangements suggest no significant gender difference. Men aged 55-64 are somewhat more likely than women (32% vs. 26%) to live in a multi-generational household, but this seems largely due to a somewhat greater likelihood that men of these ages will have children who are not yet grown up. Women aged 75 and over are no more likely to live in multi-generational households than their male counterparts (9% for both). Overall, gender differences are not notable.

**Table 3.8 Number and Percentage of Persons Aged 55 and Over Living Alone, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1931 to 1991**

Age Group	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1931 <sup>1</sup>						
55 +	..	..	..	..	117,806	9.4
1951						
55-64	..	..	..	..	54,145	5.0
65 +	..	..	..	..	99,315	9.6
55 +	..	..	..	..	153,460	7.1
1961						
55-64	35,939	5.5	49,847	7.8	85,786	6.7
65 +	63,516	9.4	108,901	15.2	172,417	12.4
55 +	99,455	7.2	158,748	11.8	258,203	9.6
1971						
55-64	53,295	6.2	101,060	11.5	154,355	8.9
65 +	86,700	11.1	233,565	24.3	320,265	18.4
55 +	139,995	8.6	334,625	18.2	474,620	13.7
1981						
55-64	85,800	8.3	163,750	14.5	249,550	11.5
65-74	76,300	11.5	241,200	30.0	317,500	21.6
75 +	53,400	15.7	197,650	36.6	251,050	28.5
55 +	215,500	10.6	602,600	24.4	818,100	18.2
1991						
55-64	117,075	10.0	191,000	15.6	308,075	12.9
65-74	106,210	12.5	302,820	29.3	409,030	21.7
75 +	82,450	17.4	317,090	40.1	399,545	31.6
55 +	305,735	12.3	810,910	26.6	1,116,650	20.1

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Newfoundland.

**Sources:** 1931: Census of Canada, Volume 5, Table 88. 1981: Public Use Microdata File, Census of Canada. 1991: Census of Canada, Special tabulation. B. Harrison (1981). *Living Alone in Canada*, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Catalogue No. 98-811.

### Living Alone: Incidence and Trends

The change probably noted most often in the family life of elderly persons is an increase in living alone, particularly among women. As Figure 3.7 shows, close to 30% of women living in private households live alone at ages 55 and over, and the figure rises to nearly 50% for women aged 75 and over. These numbers are much higher than for men (13% and 20%, respectively).

The proportion of the population aged 55 and over that lives alone has more than doubled since 1931, going from 9% to 20%, with a major increase occurring since 1971.<sup>6</sup> While the data show a higher proportion of women

<sup>6</sup> Differences between Figure 3.7 and Table 3.8 in the percentage of persons living alone are due to the use of different denominators: the population in private dwellings only in Figure 3.7 and the total population in Table 3.8.



living alone than men for all age groups since 1961, the first census in which data by sex are available on this topic, the difference between them grows over time. In 1961, the proportion of women aged 55 and over living alone was 64% greater than the proportion of men; by 1991, it was 115% greater (Table 3.8).

The increasing propensity of older women to live alone cannot be accounted for by changes in their marital status. This is demonstrated by the fact that, while the percentage of women aged 55 and over living alone more than doubled between 1961 and 1991 (from 12% to 27%; see Table 3.8), the percentage of non-married women aged 55 and over actually declined from 46% to 44% over the same period (Table A3.1). Even in the oldest age group (85 and over), the percentage of non-married women remained fairly constant from 1961 to 1991, at approximately 88%.

This dramatic increase in the proportion of older women living alone is not unique to Canada; Wolf in 1990 refers to it as "a pervasive social phenomenon in industrialized countries during the postwar era." It has received considerable research attention, involving debates about the relative importance of economic determinants, put forward, for example, by Holden, and normative determinants, invoked, for example, by Abu-Laban. Factors associated with living alone are examined in the following three sections.

### **Living Arrangements and Marital Status, 1991**

On one level, it is obvious that marital status is an important determinant of living arrangements. For example, only married persons are eligible to be in the category of those who live with a spouse only or with a spouse and a child or children. Only unmarried persons can live alone (except for rare individuals whose spouse lives elsewhere, such as in a nursing home). Table 3.9 reveals these expected patterns. Indeed, the data show that, within each age category, gender differences in living arrangements by marital status are quite small. This means that the gender variations observed are due to differences in marital status itself (Table 3.9).

The data in Table 3.9 also reveal some less obvious patterns in the living arrangements of older persons in private households. First, variations in living alone by sex for those who are not married are not large. However, single (never-married) men are less likely to live alone than men who are widowed, separated or divorced, although this is not the case for women. The single are much more likely to be living with non-relatives. Also, a higher percentage of the separated or divorced live alone than the widowed, while the latter are more likely to live with a child or children or with other relatives only. In part, this may reflect the lower fertility of the divorced (Table A3.3).

**Table 3.9 Living Arrangements of Population<sup>1</sup> Aged 55 and Over, by Sex, Ten-Year Age Group and Marital Status, Canada, 1991**

	Total Number (in thousands)	Living Arrangement (Percent)							
		Spouse Only	Multi-Generational Arrangements				Other Relatives Only	Alone	Other
			Spouse and Children	Child(ren) (No Spouse)	Parent(s) <sup>2</sup>	Total			
<b>Males</b> Single Married (Legal) Common-Law Union Widowed Separated, Divorced Total  <b>Females</b> Single Married (Legal) Common-Law Union Widowed Separated, Divorced Total  <b>Males</b> Single Married (Legal) Common-Law Union Widowed Separated, Divorced Total  <b>Females</b> Single Married (Legal) Common-Law Union Widowed Separated, Divorced Total  <b>Males</b> Single Married (Legal) Common-Law Union Widowed Separated, Divorced Total  <b>Females</b> Single Married (Legal) Common-Law Union Widowed Separated, Divorced Total	55-64								
	70.0	-	-	0.7	9.7	10.4	8.9	57.1	23.6
	930.4	52.9	35.8	0.3	-	36.1	8.7	0.3	2.1
	39.7	71.7	20.2	-	-	20.2	5.3	-	2.8
	31.6	-	-	22.8	1.2	24.0	10.3	55.1	10.7
	85.9	-	-	10.1	2.5	12.6	5.2	65.7	16.5
	1,157.7	44.9	29.4	1.6	0.8	31.9	8.4	10.1	4.7
	60.8	-	-	3.0	9.9	12.9	10.5	53.1	23.5
	836.1	61.8	27.7	0.3	0.1	28.1	1.4	0.3	8.4
	23.9	81.6	11.2	-	-	11.2	3.2	-	4.0
	166.6	-	-	25.2	1.3	26.5	13.1	51.8	8.7
	119.1	-	-	19.7	2.2	21.9	9.4	58.7	10.0
	1,206.4	44.4	19.4	5.8	1.0	26.2	4.3	15.8	9.3
	65-74								
	48.3	-	-	0.8	2.4	3.2	12.8	61.1	22.9
	656.9	74.1	16.3	0.3	-	16.6	6.2	0.5	2.6
	14.5	84.5	9.9	-	-	9.9	3.8	-	1.8
	62.5	-	-	12.4	0.2	12.6	10.0	66.6	10.8
	44.1	-	-	6.0	0.6	6.6	5.2	72.5	15.7
	826.3	60.4	13.1	1.5	0.2	14.9	6.8	12.9	5.1
54.9	-	-	1.2	2.3	3.4	13.6	58.9	24.1	
545.9	79.9	11.6	0.3	0.1	11.9	1.4	0.8	6.0	
9.8	91.5	4.1	-	-	4.1	2.0	-	2.3	
334.0	-	-	13.5	0.4	13.9	11.1	66.9	8.1	
60.0	-	-	9.9	0.8	10.7	8.3	71.1	9.9	
1,004.5	44.3	6.3	5.3	0.4	12.0	5.7	30.2	7.9	
75 +									
23.2	-	-	1.0	0.6	1.7	17.0	59.4	22.0	
293.9	81.2	8.8	0.3	-	9.1	5.3	1.3	3.1	
4.4	88.7	6.4	-	-	6.4	3.1	-	1.6	
82.0	-	-	9.9	-	9.9	12.1	65.9	12.1	
15.0	-	-	4.0	0.1	4.1	6.9	72.7	16.4	
418.4	58.0	6.2	2.4	0.1	8.7	7.3	19.7	6.4	
45.9	-	-	0.9	0.3	1.2	16.4	60.9	21.5	
171.2	82.7	6.6	0.5	-	7.2	2.1	2.8	5.4	
2.3	91.0	4.7	-	-	4.7	2.6	-	1.7	
401.1	-	-	10.8	-	10.9	12.1	67.7	9.4	
18.1	-	-	8.6	0.2	8.8	8.9	72.0	10.2	
638.6	22.5	1.8	7.3	0.1	9.1	9.6	49.7	9.2	

<sup>1</sup> Persons in private households.

<sup>2</sup> Includes parent(s) and others.

**Source:** 1991 Census of Canada, special tabulation.

Second, older persons living in a common-law union are much less likely than the legally married to live with children. This pattern is evident for both men and women and for all age groups. Since data from the 1990 General Social Survey show that there is no difference in the number of children of the married and the cohabiting, this pattern cannot be explained by that. It is possible that older persons who elect to live in a common-law union have more conflict in their relations with their children, especially if they are the children of a previous union, one of the spouses not being their parent. It may also be that, embracing more individualistic norms and values, they prefer a child-free lifestyle.

Third, the percentage of single (never-married) persons living with a child or children is about 1% for both sexes and all age groups, except among women aged 55-64 (3%). This is in line with the childbearing of people who have never married (Table 3.5).

**Table 3.10 Percentage Distribution of Marital Status of Persons Aged 55 and Over in Collective Households and in Private Households, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1991**

Marital Status	Males		Females	
	In Collective Households	In Private Households	In Collective Households	In Private Households
<b>55-64</b>				
Single	52.8	6.3	55.2	5.1
Married <sup>1</sup>	19.5	83.2	19.3	70.7
Widowed	5.9	2.8	12.9	14.1
Separated, Divorced	21.8	7.7	12.5	10.1
<b>65-74</b>				
Single	42.0	6.0	39.8	5.5
Married <sup>1</sup>	27.0	80.9	16.6	54.9
Widowed	16.9	7.7	36.6	33.6
Separated, Divorced	14.0	5.4	7.0	6.0
<b>75 +</b>				
Single	20.3	5.6	17.9	7.2
Married <sup>1</sup>	31.7	71.0	9.2	26.9
Widowed	42.1	19.8	71.1	63.0
Separated, Divorced	5.8	3.6	1.9	2.8

<sup>1</sup> Excludes common-law unions.

Source: 1991 Census, special tabulation.

The overall importance of marital status in living arrangements can also be seen by comparing the marital status of persons in private households to that of persons in collective households (institutions such as old-age homes or hospitals). It is evident that being married provides a protective effect against being placed in an institution for both men and women, and for all age groups (Table 3.10).

However, the relationship between marital status and living in a private household rather than an institution is not straightforward. For both men and women, being single (never married) carries the highest risk of living in an institution, but some of them have long-term physical or mental disabilities that prevented them from marrying. In that case, it is not their marital status that increases the probability of their living in an institution. Further, the risk of living in an institution if one is separated or divorced is much higher for men than for women. The percentage of men in institutions is two or three times higher than the percentage of them in private households, while the percentages of women in institutions and private households are almost the same. Similarly, in the widowed population, the risk of institutional living is greater among men than women. For example, in the age group 75 and over, widowers make up 20% of the male population in private households and 42% of the male population in institutions; the comparable figures for widows are 63% and 71%, respectively. There are many more widows in institutions simply because there are many more widows. Widowhood as such does not significantly increase the risk of institutional living for women.

### **Living Arrangements and Parenthood, 1990**

After marital status, the most important factor in an overview of people's living arrangements in later life is number of children. Using data from the 1990 General Social Survey, it is possible to examine the effect of the number of surviving children on the propensity of married persons, including those in common-law unions, to live with close relatives, as well as its effect on the propensity of persons without a spouse to live alone (Table 3.11).

The number of surviving children bears no relationship to whether or not married persons live with close relatives; this is not surprising since most married people live with their spouse, who is considered a close relative. However, for non-married women, the relationship between the number of surviving children and the propensity to live alone is quite strong (data for non-married men are not available due to small sample size). For example, 85% of non-married women aged 75 and over with no surviving children live alone, contrasted with 61% of their counterparts with five or more children. It appears, then, that availability of children is an important predictor of living alone, a finding that has been reported previously by Wister and Burch in 1983.



**Table 3.11 Percentage of Persons Aged 55 and Over, Married and Living with Close Relatives or Non-Married and Living Alone<sup>1</sup>, by Age Group and Number of Surviving Children, Canada, 1990**

	Married Living with Close Relatives <sup>2</sup>				Non-Married <sup>3</sup> Living Alone			
	0	1-2	3-4	5 +	0	1-2	3-4	5 +
<b>Males</b>								
55-64	93.1	93.2	94.6	95.0	--	--	--	--
65-74	96.6	96.2	94.9	90.1	--	--	--	--
75 +	88.9	97.5	97.3	99.3	--	--	--	--
<b>Females</b>								
55-64	100.0	94.1	95.1	95.7	62.7	72.9	65.0	41.6
65-74	88.2	91.8	96.7	96.1	76.1	79.1	68.2	54.9
75 +	--	--	--	--	85.0	77.7	80.4	62.1

<sup>1</sup> Sample size does not allow an analysis of all living arrangements.

<sup>2</sup> Living with close relatives includes spouse, child(ren) and parent(s). Includes common-law unions.

<sup>3</sup> Includes the never married, widowed, separated and divorced.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

## Other Variations in Living Arrangements

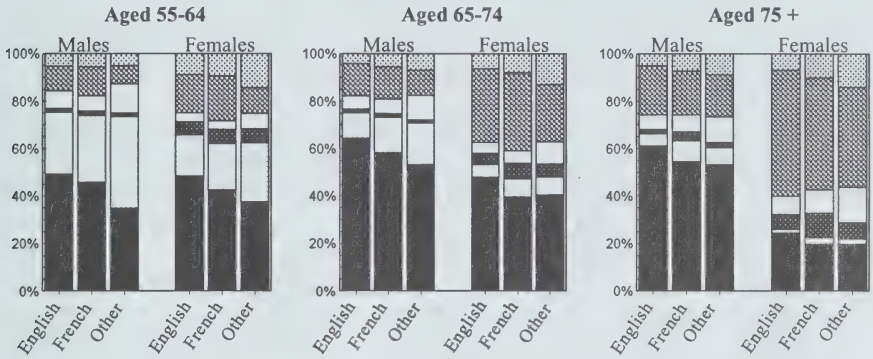
Figure 3.8 presents variations in living arrangements by age and sex in relation to mother tongue, place of birth and annual individual income. Differences by mother tongue are not large but a few are worthy of note. In general, those of French mother tongue are somewhat more likely to live with a spouse and children and less likely to live with a spouse only than are those of English mother tongue, patterns that hold up for both women and men and for all three age categories. This may represent the higher fertility of the those of French mother tongue in this generation, i.e., they may simply have a greater number of children available to live with. However, it is also possible that the data reflect a remnant of the "stem-family"<sup>7</sup> tradition in Quebec. These reasons could be behind the comparatively high incidence (10%) among Francophone women aged 75 and over living with a child or children but not a spouse. Nevertheless, most people of both mother tongues share a pattern that does not include significant levels of living with children.

People with other mother tongues (a heterogeneous category, to be sure) differ from those of both French and English mother tongue in their living arrangements. Both women and men in this category are less likely to live alone and more likely to live with "other relatives only" and with "others," i.e., non-relatives and combinations of relatives and non-relatives. According to Thomas and Wister, this may reflect economic factors (e.g., the need to pool economic resources) or norms and values that favour communal living.

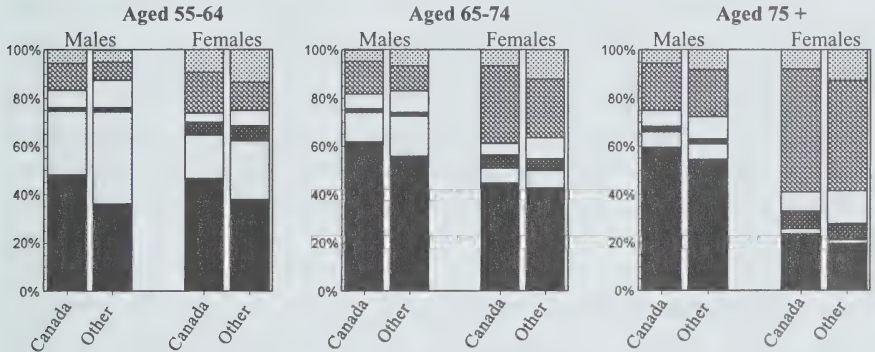
<sup>7</sup> The stem-family system is one in which one child, preferably a son, remains in the parental home upon marriage.

**Figure 3.8 Living Arrangements of Population Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Age Group, Showing Mother Tongue, Place of Birth and Individual Income, Canada, 1991**

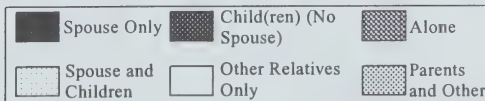
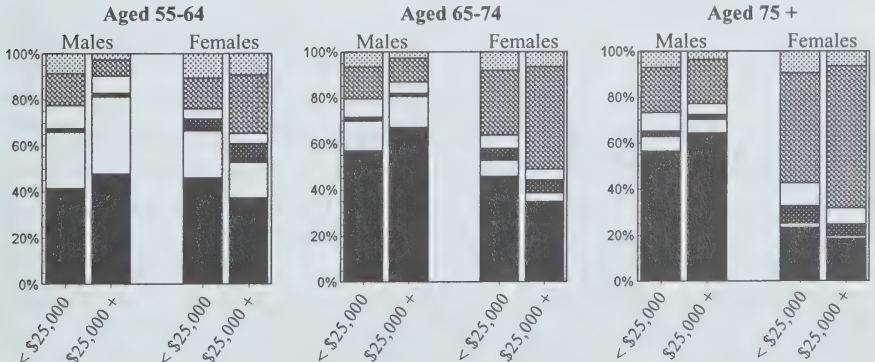
**Mother Tongue**



**Place of Birth**



**Individual Income (in Dollars)**



As with mother tongue, variations in living arrangements by place of birth are not large. However, persons born outside Canada are more likely to live with a spouse and children, especially in the 55-74 age group. This may be due to children leaving home later or to adult children sharing the parents' residence temporarily while they accumulate economic resources. Also, persons born outside Canada are less likely to live alone.

Income variations (less than \$25,000 vs. \$25,000 or more annual individual income) have an influence on living arrangements, and are greater for women than for men. Compared to low-income men, men with higher income are more likely to live with a spouse and, for those aged 55-64, with children as well. Men with higher income who are aged less than 75 are somewhat more likely to live alone. Compared to low-income women, women with higher income are less likely to live with a spouse, or with a spouse and children. This may be explained by income differentials in survivorship or remarriage, i.e., women with higher income are less likely to be widows than women with lower income. Also, a strong income effect on living alone exists for women. For example, among women aged 75 and over, almost 62% with annual incomes over \$25,000 live alone, compared to only 48% with incomes below \$25,000. The comparable data for men are 20% in both cases. Even among women aged 55-64, the percentage of wealthier women who live alone is nearly double that of women with low income (26% vs. 14%). It would appear that older women with financial resources use them to purchase privacy.

### **Family Transitions of People in Later Life**

The 1990 General Social Survey, in conjunction with life-history-event analytical techniques, allows the examination of aspects of the family life course that are often not accessible to more conventional family data and techniques.<sup>8</sup> The focus here will be on the sequencing of selected life-course events in later life (i.e., at ages 55 and over). The data restrict the analysis to events and transitions of the family life course concerning marriage and fertility or parenthood, for the most part.

The techniques of life-history analysis allow the examination of the sequence of events preceding family contraction and dissolution (Table 3.12). The theoretical rationale for such an examination according to Hagestad, 1990, stems from the life-course perspective, which emphasizes that the ordering of events has important implications for the unfolding life course. For instance, a woman who becomes a grandmother before completing her own reproductive career faces a very different configuration of roles (and perhaps role strain) than a woman who becomes a grandmother only after all her own children are adults.

<sup>8</sup> The techniques of life-history event analysis are detailed in Chapter 4, and will not be repeated here.

**Table 3.12 Percentage of Transitions After Age 54, by Immediately Preceding Event, Gender and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1990**

Previous Event	Cohort	Family Life Events <sup>1</sup>					
		Dissolution First Widowhood		Contraction			
				First Child's Home-Leaving		Last Child's Home-Leaving	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
Cohabiting	1911-20	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1921-30	--	1	--	10	--	--
First Marriage	1911-20	16	18	--	--	--	--
	1921-30	15	8	--	--	--	--
Second Marriage	1911-20	--	--	2	10	6	3
	1921-30	--	--	--	--	6	1
First Separation, Divorce	1911-20	--	--	2	6	1	1
	1921-30	--	--	2	10	1	4
First Widowerhood	1911-20	--	--	4	29	5	16
	1921-30	--	--	6	19	4	12
First Birth	1911-20	--	2	24	16	--	--
	1921-30	4	1	25	19	--	--
Last Birth	1911-20	9	6	69	39	9	4
	1921-30	12	9	67	42	3	7
First Child's Home-Leaving	1911-20	39	37	--	--	80	77
	1921-30	31	40	--	--	87	75
Last Child's Home-Leaving	1911-20	36	37	--	--	--	--
	1921-30	38	41	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Percentages not computed if the number of events in a cohort is less than 20.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

Regarding what is often viewed as the initial step in family contraction, i.e., the departure of the first child from the parental home, the experience of men varies considerably less than that of women. For nearly 70% of the men aged 55 or older who experience this transition in the family life course, the immediately preceding family event is the birth of the last child. For an additional one-quarter of men, the immediately preceding event is the birth of the first child (Table 3.12). For women, the comparable figures are approximately 40% and about 17%, respectively. A relatively high proportion of women (29% of the older cohort and 19% of the younger) experiences widowhood before the first child leaves home. For these women, there is no "empty nest". Thus, the notion that nuclear families begin to contract when children start to leave home does not hold for a significant proportion of today's older women.



Gender differences are smaller, but still present, with regard to departure of the last child. For both men and women, the most common event preceding the last child's leaving home is the first child's leaving home, although this is somewhat more typical of men. As with the departure of the first child, proportionately more women than men are widowed before the last child leaves home. Although the percentages are quite small, more men experience a second marriage as the event immediately preceding the departure of the last child. This reflects the higher rate of remarriage of older men. Overall, the data in Table 3.12 on family contraction show that the home-leaving stage has been more homogeneously experienced by men than by women, and, for women, is more likely to be temporally related to widowhood.

In contrast, there are not large gender differences regarding the family event immediately preceding first widowhood. Approximately 80% of both men and women experience the departure of either the first or last child as the family event occurring immediately before widowhood. Also, approximately equal but fairly small percentages of women and men go directly from first marriage to widowhood, reflecting characteristics of these cohorts previously noted, a relatively high rate of childlessness and a low propensity for marital separation or divorce.

The data on family life history allow a better understanding of the dynamics underlying the family characteristics of people in later life described earlier. While most persons who are now aged 55 and over have married and had children, the life course unfolds differently for women and men. Women are more likely to be widowed, and at earlier ages. Men are older when they experience the departure of children, which accounts for their higher incidence of living in multi-generational households in the earlier years of later life. The temporal relationship between widowhood and children leaving home differs by gender; women are more likely to experience the departure of children after being widowed. Therefore, the normative pattern of the stages of family life — marriage, children, departure of children, empty nest and widowhood — is based more on men's experience of the family life course than on women's. Further, men who experience a marital dissolution are more likely to remarry, and thus resume a "normal" family life course. The greater diversity in the characteristics of family life for older women, therefore, results from greater heterogeneity throughout the course of their life.

### **Interaction within Older Families**

The tendency to equate households and families, (i.e., the idea that all family interaction occurs within the confines of a household, an idea embedded in a youth-oriented paradigm no longer in keeping with our demographic composition) has contributed to a view of elderly people,

**Table 3.13 Frequency and Type of Contact with Children<sup>1</sup> and Siblings<sup>2</sup>, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990 (in Percent)**

	Males		Females		
	Contact with:				
	Child	Sibling	Child	Sibling	
	55-64				
	Personal Contact				
		Daily or at Least Once a Week	55.0	24.2	65.6
	Never	2.9	15.0	0.9	12.1
	Telephone Contact				
		Daily or at Least Once a Week	67.3	22.9	82.1
	Never	6.2	7.6	2.6	5.1
	65-74				
	Personal Contact				
		Daily or at Least Once a Week	56.8	23.4	58.8
	Never	2.7	23.0	0.3	13.5
	Telephone Contact				
		Daily or at Least Once a Week	71.4	26.0	80.7
	Never	4.7	9.2	3.7	3.9
75 +					
Personal Contact					
	Daily or at Least Once a Week	56.2	18.9	60.4	18.7
Never	2.8	21.9	1.8	19.4	
Telephone Contact					
	Daily or at Least Once a Week	67.3	23.9	75.5	38.5
Never	5.6	13.9	0.4	10.6	

<sup>1</sup> Persons with at least one surviving child; data refer to one 'reference' child only who is living outside respondent's household.

<sup>2</sup> Persons with siblings only; data refer to siblings living outside respondent's household.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

especially those who live alone, as socially isolated and lacking a family life. However, when considering older families, it is important to examine family interaction between households. A large body of Canadian research on this topic exists (e.g., Stone in 1988, Connidis in 1989, McDaniel and McKinnon in 1993, Chappell and Prince in 1994 and McDaniel in 1994).

The data in Table 3.13 indicate that older persons have a high level of contact with children and siblings living outside their household. In all categories, more than 55% of persons aged 55 and over interact with a child outside their household at least once a week. Telephone contact is more frequent than face-to-face interaction; contact with children is more common than contact with siblings. Age variations in contact both in person and by telephone are small,

**Table 3.14 Percentage of Persons<sup>1</sup> Aged 65 and Over Receiving Informal Assistance, Showing Sources of Assistance<sup>2</sup>, by Sex, Age and Marital Status, Canada, 1990**

	Males			Females		
	Married	Widowed	Other	Married	Widowed	Other
<b>65-74</b>						
Total Percentage Receiving at Least One Type of Assistance	35.0	--	--	47.5	66.9	53.9
From Son	11.1	--	--	13.0	24.3	6.4
From Daughter	8.0	--	--	13.8	28.3	8.0
From Sibling	1.5	--	--	4.0	5.4	10.0
From Other Relatives	8.3	--	--	12.8	12.6	10.0
From Friend	17.0	--	--	20.2	23.8	25.3
<b>75 +</b>						
Total Percentage Receiving at Least One Type of Assistance	47.6	--	--	61.1	73.1	--
From Son	10.3	--	--	20.9	25.7	--
From Daughter	9.9	--	--	23.2	24.5	--
From Sibling	1.6	--	--	3.0	4.2	--
From Other Relatives	10.0	--	--	17.8	16.8	--
From Friend	26.3	--	--	19.7	27.4	--

<sup>1</sup> Persons living in the community only.

<sup>2</sup> Persons outside respondent's household.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

although there is some tendency for the level of contact to be lower for persons aged 75 and over. Gender differences are more striking; women have more frequent contact with children and siblings than do men. These findings are not new, but they do underline that older people are not isolated from family members living outside their household, and that women are more involved in family ties than men, illustrating what Rosenthal in 1985 has called the "kin-keeping" role that many older women play.

An analysis of General Social Survey data not presented here<sup>9</sup> reveals marital-status differences in contact for women.<sup>10</sup> Overall, widows are in more frequent contact with children than other women, and separated and divorced women are more highly involved with siblings than are women of other marital statuses. Thus, it appears that women without a spouse compensate by increasing their contacts with other close relatives.

Data on the receipt of informal assistance by persons aged 65 and over are provided in Tables 3.14 and 3.15.<sup>11</sup> With the exception of married persons aged 65-74, more than half of seniors receive at least one type of informal

<sup>9</sup> Support for the following analysis is weak since the data on which it is based are not, strictly speaking, statistically significant.

<sup>10</sup> Data on this topic are not available for men.

<sup>11</sup> It must be kept in mind that older persons not only receive assistance; they also provide assistance both to other seniors (e.g., siblings and friends) and to younger generations.

help. As expected, the percentage of persons receiving assistance increases with age and its associated physical frailties. Women, regardless of age, are more likely to receive assistance than men; the widowed receive more help than persons in other marital statuses. Thus, widows are the most likely to receive at least one type of informal assistance: 67% of widows aged 65-74 and 73% of widows aged 75 and over. According to Chappell and Prince, 1994, marital status is a major predictor of the informal assistance received by older persons.

**Table 3.15 Percentage of Persons<sup>1</sup> Aged 65 and Over Receiving Various Types of Informal Assistance, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1990**

Type of Assistance	65-74	75 +
<b>Males</b>		
Unpaid Housework	10.8	13.4
Unpaid Household Maintenance	20.6	22.5
Unpaid Transportation	20.7	34.3
Financial Support	1.8	0.6
<b>Females</b>		
Unpaid Housework	11.3	21.7
Unpaid Household Maintenance	24.9	23.2
Unpaid Transportation	42.4	57.0
Financial Support	2.3	2.0

<sup>1</sup> Persons living in private households only.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

Family members outside the household play a key role as sources of support. Except among married persons aged 55-74, children are identified as significant providers of assistance. It is interesting to note that sons and daughters are identified approximately equally as providers of assistance. These data are consistent with the findings in the gerontological literature on caregiving which show that gender differences in the provision of support relate to the type of assistance given and the caregiving role. For example, daughters are more engaged in hands-on care and the provision of emotional support. Elder care occurs through a gendered division of labour, as do other types of familial and domestic work.

Other relatives also play a fairly important role in providing assistance, especially for women. Siblings appear to be minor helpers; however, a recent Canadian study by Connidis in 1994 shows that, while a minority of older persons actually receive support from siblings, a majority perceive siblings as available in the event of a crisis.

Lack of data restricts comparisons between the genders among older people in terms of the amount of assistance received. However, the limited data in Table 3.14 for the married suggest that women receive more support in general, are more likely to report assistance from children, siblings and other relatives, and are more likely to be assisted by friends. These data are in keeping with the general finding that older women have more extensive networks of social support than older men.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A supporting finding from the 1990 General Social Survey (not presented here) is that women report a much wider range of persons to turn to when depressed. Among the married, men are more likely to turn to their spouse than women are. Among the widowed, a much higher proportion of women than of men turn to a child (44% and 29%, respectively, in the population aged 75 and over, for example).



The types of informal assistance received by older persons do not vary significantly by age or gender, with one exception: older women are more likely to receive help with housework than are older men. This is most probably due both to the greater incidence of widowhood among women and the social expectation that women are responsible for housework. Assistance with transportation is the major type of help received by both genders and both age groups.

The percentage of persons reporting the various types of help increases with age and is higher for women (except for household maintenance, for which the gender difference is minimal). It is noteworthy that informal financial assistance is not provided to older persons, regardless of their age or gender.

The data in this section show the importance of non-household family members in the lives of older Canadians. This is especially true for women; however, the role that kin play for men is not inconsequential. The findings here have both research and policy implications. On the research side, the conceptualization and operationalization of "family" need to be expanded so that ties not based on the household are included to a much greater degree. Failure to do so will perpetuate a view of families that is not in keeping with the lives of a growing segment of the population. On the policy side, the informal familial support system that is in place needs to be recognized and the formal system harmonized with it. If the capacity of the informal system is over-extended, the end result will be an increased need for formal care, clearly an unintended (and undesirable) consequence on both financial and human grounds.

## Conclusion

This examination of families in later life can be framed in terms of the dimensions of continuity, change and diversity. In many ways, the family characteristics of persons in later life show continuities with those of the past. A high percentage of today's aged people married, had children (sometimes in large numbers), and stayed married until widowhood or are still married. In large part, factors outside an individual's control, such as the early death of a spouse or involuntary childlessness, account for variation from the normative pattern. That today's older population lives, and lived, a "traditional" family life<sup>13</sup> is not surprising, given that they were young in an historical context in which alternatives were socially and legally unacceptable.

What is perhaps more surprising is the degree to which older persons have accepted the family changes occurring among their

<sup>13</sup> This is not to downplay the degree of heterogeneity of family life in earlier times (Gee, 1986), but to emphasize that differences were less a matter of choice.

children. This is evident in the close ties that continue to exist across the generations.<sup>14</sup>

Yet changes are emerging in families in later life. Surely the most dramatic change, as well as the first to emerge, is the increasing number of people living alone, particularly older women. However, other changes are beginning to surface among the youngest cohorts, e.g., increases in cohabitation, non-marital fertility and divorce. While still affecting only a small portion of the older population, the data suggest a future in which families in later life have very different characteristics than they do at present.

The major phenomenon to emerge from the data in this chapter is the great diversity of family characteristics and family life courses in the older population. This diversity encompasses age, economic factors, cultural factors — but, most decisively, gender.<sup>15</sup> Apart from observing the well-established differences between men and women (e.g., women are more likely to be widowed, men are more likely to remarry, women have a higher incidence of living alone), the greater degree of heterogeneity with regard to family life within the female population has been demonstrated. The normative pattern of the family life course more closely corresponds with the experience of men, and male-based models of family life, even implicit ones, do not serve well an aging population which is more and more dominated by women.

Moreover, the effect of non-family variables on family life is more potent for women than for men. Age itself is a weaker determinant of the family characteristics of men than of women; for example, even at the oldest ages (85 and over), more than half of men are married, compared with fewer than 12% of women. Educational attainment has a greater effect on women's marital status than men's. Among previously-married men, income and marital status are not related, whereas for women, the way the marriage ended affects income. Finally, level of income is closely associated with living alone among women, but not among men.

That older women's family characteristics are more closely related to economic factors reveals the economic vulnerability associated with the domestic role in Canadian society, a vulnerability which affects the whole life course of women. Social and labour policies, in this author's view, need to take cognizance of the value of the domestic contribution women make throughout their lives, and of the price they pay because of it. Not to do so will increase the proportion of older women in poor economic straits.

---

<sup>14</sup> It is also evident in 1990 General Social Survey data (not presented here) which show that older persons are very satisfied with family relations.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to keep in mind that these factors are all interrelated.



## **Chapter 4**

### **THE FAMILY LIFE COURSE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY CANADA: CHANGES, TRENDS AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

**Fernando Rajulton**

**Zenaida R. Ravanera**

#### **Introduction**

##### **The Family Life Course**

The nature of the family itself, the most fundamental of all human institutions, has changed drastically during the last two decades, and a simple examination of the structure and composition of families is no longer sufficient to grasp how it works. In many developed societies, an emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities seems to have replaced a reliance on obligations among family members. Relationships between parents and their grown children have changed, and family relationships have become more complicated.

Such a drastic change in the nature of the family calls for an analytical approach that differs in important respects from one emphasizing family structure and composition. It is this approach, called a life-course approach, which will be used in this chapter. Hareven describes its essence as the study of the synchronization of individual transitions with collective family behaviour, as well as of the cumulative effect of earlier transitions on subsequent ones. A life history is viewed as a sequence of transitions, each affecting choices in the next phase of life. If information on the decisions associated with transitions in individual lives is available (for example, the decision to work, to leave the parental household, to marry or to bear children), the life-course approach will greatly enhance the understanding of changes in the nature of families. Each of these decisions is affected by personal and family resources, economic constraints and social interactions at the moment it is made. Therefore, such information can be used to build a framework for both an economic and a social analysis of families.

Until now, analyses of the family life cycle have focused mainly on traditional patterns. However, recent changes in family formation and dissolution point to the importance of non-traditional patterns. At the same time, it is not only more recent changes that call for examining the non-traditional patterns. As Ravanera et al., in 1993 have shown, the so-called typical sequence of transitions in the life course of the family was not typical, even in the oldest cohorts of men and women. Only a minority of men and women born during the first decade of the 20th century experienced the



sequence of leaving home followed by marriage, having births and children's leaving home within an intact first marriage. More divergent paths in the sequence of transitions experienced by cohorts born after the Great Depression or after World War II have surely made the idea of such a typical path obsolete. The main thrust of the presentation here, therefore, will be to reveal divergent paths through an analysis of life-course data gathered by the 1990 General Social Survey, entitled "Family and Friends."

### **A Cohort Perspective**

One way to examine the changes in the nature of families is by identifying the influence of historical events on the transitions of individuals. The terms "generation"<sup>1</sup> and "birth cohort" will be used indifferently to designate a group of persons born in a given period, for example, between 1911 and 1920, between 1921 and 1930, etc. Successive generations experience, according to Ryder, changing patterns of family and peer socialization, different educational content and options, varying economic conditions, and unique events such as war and political change. The concept of generation thus lends itself particularly well to the examination of the changes in the nature of families and the events of family life. It is particularly the younger cohorts who initiate fundamental shifts in social behaviour and cultural or political attitudes.

The 1990 General Social Survey interviewed a random sample of 13,495 men and women aged 15 and above of the population of Canada, excluding only the residents of Yukon and Northwest Territories and long-term residents of institutions. It is thus possible to examine birth cohorts of men and women spanning three-quarters of the 20th century. For analytical purposes, they have been divided into six ten-year birth cohorts, the first going from 1911 to 1920 and the last from 1961 to 1970. Those born before 1911 have been excluded. The men and women belonging to these cohorts were thus aged 70-79 in the first to 20-29 in the last at the time of the survey. Each of these six ten-year cohorts will be further divided into five-year cohorts (e.g., 1911-15, 1916-20) when the events being analysed, such as leaving home, are experienced by a large enough number of cohort members to provide stable estimates of statistical measures.

Evidently the survey cannot include all the experiences of family life, especially for the youngest cohorts. Although the experiences of older cohorts are not immune from truncation (for example, a woman aged 70 could become a widow the year after the survey), most have probably gone through the important stages of their life. This sort of truncation is known as censoring in the statistical literature. All the analytical techniques used in this chapter take this into account and correct the statistical measures for censoring. Since censored experiences can still throw light on recent trends, the younger cohorts

---

<sup>1</sup> A generation in its strict demographic sense consists of the persons born the same year.

are deliberately included in the analysis. However, the results presented for the cohorts aged less than 40 at the time of the survey should be viewed as indicators of trends rather than as established patterns in Canadian society.

### **The Stages of the Family Life Course**

The information necessary to determine the course of an individual's family life depends on the characteristics of the starting point of the life course and the different stages to be distinguished within it. A first marriage has generally been considered the beginning of a new family and therefore the reference point for the start of the family life course. However, the date on which the wedding was celebrated can be a poor point of reference for the beginning of the family cycle in societies where premarital pregnancies, trial marriages, and consensual unions frequently occur (on this subject see Trost, 1977).

The experiences of many researchers as well as recent changes in Canadian society suggest avoiding first marriage as the starting point of the family life course. It has been judged preferable to use instead the situation at age 15, when most young people are still living with their parents. This stage, of an unmarried 15-year-old living with parents, will be the origin of the life course in the following pages.

The choice of the number of stages depends entirely on the data available and the type of analytical technique adopted. The General Social Survey collected the following information on respondents: leaving home, marriage, cohabitation, separation and divorce, the death of a spouse, births and the home-leaving of the respondent's children. A typical life course includes the stages of leaving home, family formation, growth, completed growth, contraction and completed contraction. To these, a few atypical stages can be added, such as the formation of a common-law union, separation and divorce, widowhood and a second marriage (or reconstitution). Since the General Social Survey provides information on when respondents experienced these events, they can be dated. They will be designated by two letters in brackets. The passage from one to another is a transition:

1. Home-leaving (HL)
2. First cohabitation (FC)
3. First marriage (FM)
4. First separation/divorce (FS)
5. First widowhood (FW)
6. Second marriage (SM)
7. First birth (FB)
8. Last birth (LB)
9. Launching of first child (LF), and
10. Launching of last child (LL).

The first three stages can be viewed as those relating to family formation, the next three as those relating to the dissolution and reconstitution of families, the next two as those where people become parents (family extension) and the last two as those where children leave home (family contraction). These stages with the starting point, that is, living with parents at age 15 (OR), make a total of eleven stages.

## **Methodology**

First, the experience of life events will be examined separately for various cohorts of men and women using a life table. A life table is an accounting device that follows a real or hypothetical cohort over time. It offers a way of evaluating the probability that an individual who has reached a given stage will move to a subsequent stage. For example, if one is interested in studying how quickly those in common-law unions get legally married, the life-table method permits the computation of the probability of a legal marriage at different durations since the start of a common-law union. As mentioned, censoring is a problem when transitions from one stage to another are being studied. A life table overcomes this problem by correcting the probabilities at the various durations for censored individuals, for example, for those cohabitants who had not married by the time of the interview. Consequently, all statistical measures used for describing changes from cohort to cohort, and the trends that emerge, are computed from these corrected probabilities. These measures will mostly be in terms of volume of transitions (or proportions making the transitions) and timing (such as mean or median age or duration).

Second, a more important step in the analysis is to show the influence of past transitions on certain subsequent transitions. This is based on the premise that past experience affects an individual's future life. This analysis will focus on the effect of previous transitions on subsequent ones by considering several important sequences; this will show the divergent paths that Canadian women and men take in their experience of family life.

## **Changes and Trends in Life Course Transitions**

The method of the family life course is very important for studying social change, since the variety of stages which men and women pass through during their life is intricately connected with historical changes.

Age at marriage, age at leaving home, child-spacing, periods of family extension or contraction are not just age-specific demographic phenomena, they are socially and culturally defined, and are therefore subject to historical change. With this idea in mind, this section examines them in the transitions of the family life course.



## Changes and Trends Related to Family Formation

### *Leaving Home*

Almost all studies assume family formation to start with a first marriage. However, recent trends clearly show that this assumption is less valid today than in the past. Leaving the parental home, rather than marriage, has become an important *rite de passage* to adulthood and independent living. Home-leaving is also often associated with other events of the life course, such as marriage, the pursuit of higher education and employment.

The time at which children leave home has now become an important topic of interest in family studies. Research interest in home-leaving was particularly high in the mid-1980s, when it was observed that the young were “cluttering the nest” by staying home longer than expected and sometimes even by returning home after leaving. To understand these recent changes, it is necessary to examine past patterns of leaving home.

The General Social Survey has questions on the home-leaving of respondents themselves, as well as on their children’s departures.<sup>2</sup> Only the data on respondents’ own home-leaving are considered here; the data on that of respondents’ children will be presented in a later section. In addition, all cases in which people leave home before age 15 are excluded, as the idea is closely associated with adulthood and living independently.

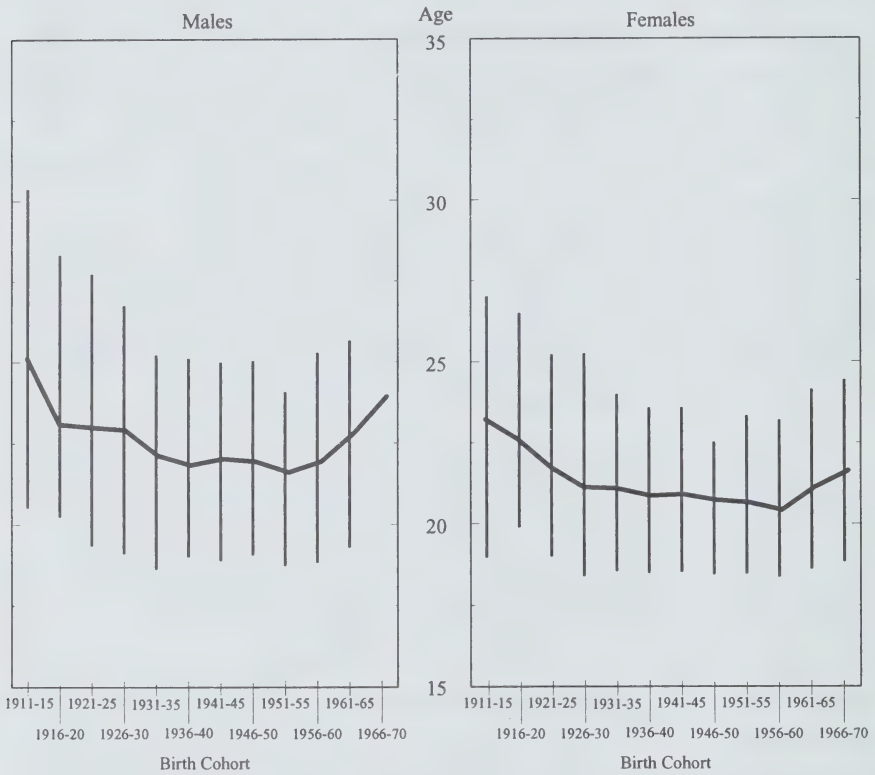
Figure 4.1 presents the median age on leaving home for men and women born between 1911 and 1970 by five-year birth cohort. The median age is that by which 50% of the cohort have left the parental home. The figure also shows the ages by which 25% and 75% of the members of the cohort have left home; the difference between them indicates the number of years within which the middle 50% of the cohort leave the parental home.

As Figure 4.1 shows, men and women born in 1911-15 stayed longest on average in the parental home. Their median age on leaving home (25.1 for men and 23.0 for women) is older than that of any of the more recent cohorts. The decline in median age starts with the next cohort. A significant decline of about a year from cohort to cohort occurs among men born during

<sup>2</sup> The General Social Survey asked respondents not living with either parent, “How old were you when you last lived with one or both of your parents?” and “What was the main reason for your move?”. Similarly, respondents living with their parents at the time of the interview were asked whether they had always lived with at least one of their parents. If they said no, they were asked, “How old were you when you last left home to live on your own?” and “What was the main reason for this move?”. These questions were intended to refer to their final departure from the parental home to establish their own household. It is, however, difficult to tell how respondents, young and old, understood these questions. The “age at final departure” might have been somewhat clearer to older men and women (even though a few of them reported leaving home at age 75) than to younger men and women. Given the possible differences in the interpretation of the survey questions and the greater likelihood of younger men and women returning to the parental home, the results obtained for younger cohorts should be interpreted cautiously.



**Figure 4.1 Median and Interquartile Range of Age at Home-Leaving by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970**



**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

the first half of the 1930s and then again of half a year among men born during the early 1950s. Among women, the most marked decline is shown by the cohorts born in the 1920s, and is then slower from cohort to cohort until women born during the late 1950s reach the lowest median age, about 20. A reversal of the trend starts among men born in the late 1950s and among women born in the early 1960s, and this increase in the median age on leaving home continues in the most recent cohorts.

Figure 4.1 also shows that women leave the parental home earlier than men; the difference between their median ages ranges from about one year to more than two years. Studies by Goldscheider and Goldscheider in 1994 in the United States show that the ages at which young men and women leave the parental home are converging, although women are still leaving at an earlier age than men. In Canada, the gap between the sexes not only remains

but increases in the younger cohorts. In other words, the young are staying longer in the parental home, men are staying longer than women, and the propensity of men to remain at home is increasing even faster than that of women.

The information provided on reasons for leaving home shows that the importance of marriage has declined for both men and women. Employment has generally been a more important reason for men than women, but it too has lost significance. By contrast, the desire for independence is increasingly given by both men and women as a reason for leaving home. The desire for independence has surpassed marriage as the most common reason in the cohorts born at the height of the baby boom and after (1956-1975). Finally, school attendance has gained significance in explaining the timing of leaving home because of the spectacular increase over the past few decades in the proportion of young people pursuing post-secondary education (for further details on this topic, see Ravanera and associates).

One of the advantages of analysing sociodemographic behaviour by cohorts is the possibility of identifying the effects of major historical, political, social and economic changes. World War II, for example, seems to have exercised a considerable influence on the fall in the age at which women leave home. Women born during the 1920s reached the age of leaving home sometime during the war and the years immediately following; it is among them that the median age on leaving home starts to decline. Similarly, the 1916-20 cohort of men, who reached the age of leaving home around the mid-1930s, seems to have been influenced by the lingering effects of the Great Depression and probably by the preparations for the war. The relatively young age on leaving home observed in the cohorts of men born during the 1950s cannot be explained by a single major event. One possible explanation is the start of the period of economic growth and prosperity after the war.

That the Great Depression and postwar economic growth have the same effect, that of lowering the age on leaving home, might seem contradictory. An explanation can be found in changing strategies of family survival. Early in the century, families depended on their members to satisfy their material needs; children were expected to contribute whenever they could. But during the Depression, young men felt obliged to leave home earlier to lessen the number of mouths to feed or to look for jobs to support the family. On the other hand, by the middle of the 20th century the sources of material security were no longer confined to the family. Social security, in the form of public health care, unemployment insurance and public pensions, freed children from their obligations to their family of origin and thus gave them the possibility of leaving earlier. But, to continue to speculate, strategies of survival during the most recent period of slower economic growth have again changed. Not only has economic growth slowed, but unemployment among young people has increased, as has the cost of housing. Bibby and Posterski

argue that social factors like weakening sexual norms lead to less pressure on young people to leave home and marry, and that parents' and children's standards of acceptable behaviour increasingly overlap.

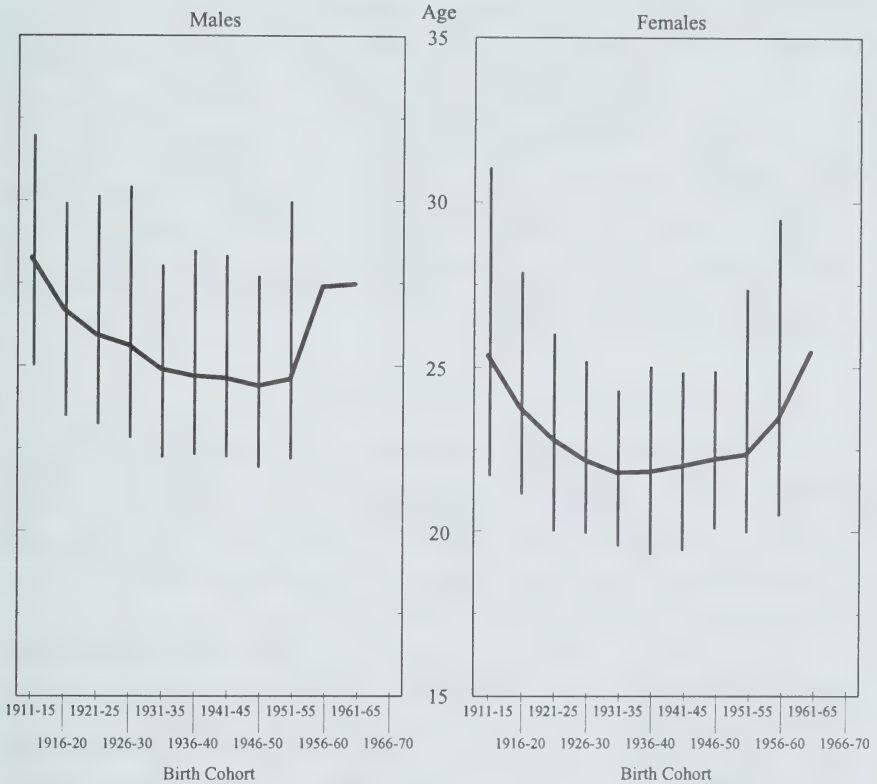
### *First Marriage*

Several studies have examined the incidence of first marriage in Canada, and some have examined its timing. Dumas and Péron in 1992, for example, trace the marriage rate and the timing of marriage in Canada as far back as the early 19th century. They have also computed the mean age of annual birth cohorts at marriage from 1906 to 1938. Vital statistics and the census were the main sources of data for these studies. This section discusses the trends in the occurrence and timing of first marriage for cohorts born from 1911 to 1970 as revealed by the General Social Survey. Median age rather than mean age is used as indicator of the timing of marriage. Despite the differences in the source of data and the indicator used, the findings presented here are not substantially different from those of Dumas and Péron. It should be noted that, because the General Social Survey data refer only to survivors, their use introduces a small bias. What is important to note, however, is that since leaving home and first marriage are often concurrent events in the lives of men and women, the findings presented here closely resemble those in the previous section.

Figure 4.2 shows that the oldest cohort of men (1911-15) has the highest median age at first marriage, 28.6 years. The median age declines with each succeeding five-year cohort, reaching 24.8 years in the cohort born in 1931-35. There is no significant change in the cohorts born from 1936 to 1955, the median hovering around 24.5, but a dramatic increase, to 27.6, occurs in the 1956-60 birth cohort. The median age stays at this high level for the next two younger cohorts. As of the time of the survey, fewer than 75% of the three youngest cohorts (1956-70) are married; however, the first 25% who married did so at older ages than the preceding cohorts (at 23.6, 24.2, and 24.7 years for the 1956-60, 1961-65, and 1966-70 cohorts respectively).

Women marry at younger ages, and the trend from cohort to cohort is similar to men's. Starting at the highest median age on first marriage in the oldest cohort (1911-15), 25.5 years, there is a continuous decline to a low of 21.5 years in the cohort born in 1931-35. The median age remains at this low level with barely perceptible increases for the next few cohorts. Then, as with men, a significant increase, to 23.3 years, occurs among women born in 1956-60; the median age reaches an all-time high of 25.6 years in the next cohort (1961-65). Judging from the age at first marriage of the 25% of women in the youngest cohort (1966-70) who are married at the time of the survey, they should equal or even exceed the mark established by women born in the second decade of the century.

**Figure 4.2 Median and Interquartile Range of Age at First Marriage by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970**



**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

Besides the median age at first marriage, Figure 4.2 shows the interquartile range. This range is normally narrowest for a cohort whose members mostly marry young, and this is what is found among men born between 1931 and 1950 and among women born between 1926 and 1950. These men and women married within a range of six years and five years respectively. Over the course of the 20th century, the general trend from cohort to cohort in age at first marriage has been downward; it is only in recent cohorts that it has been reversed. Most of the changes have occurred when there were corresponding changes in social and economic conditions, notably during the depression of the 1930s and the decades of affluence and economic prosperity after World War II.

Demographic changes also exercise an important influence. These changes include the fall in mortality, the increase in childbearing out of wedlock and childlessness, and the increasing rate of marital dissolution.



In the oldest cohorts considered in this study, for example, there is a rather high proportion of people who never married, 10%, in line with the experience of European populations. Beginning with the cohorts born in the 1920s, the proportion who never marry declines along with the decline in the age at first marriage. However, the trend has been reversed in the more recent period of slow economic growth and high competition for jobs. Marriage itself is seen as less attractive by the youngest cohorts, in the context of an increasing rate of marital dissolution and of the social, legal and political acceptance of alternative lifestyles such as common-law unions and same-sex couples. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that for most Canadian men and women a legal marriage is still the initial stage of the family life course. Future studies of the family life course, however, must consider the divergent paths that the youngest cohorts are establishing.

### *First Union*

First union refers either to first marriage or to first cohabitation, whichever is entered first. When cohabitation was not prevalent, first union almost always occurred when a person first married. With the increasing prevalence of cohabitation among young adults, it is more likely that their first union will be cohabitation rather than legal marriage. This section compares the timing of first union with that of first marriage.

Figure 4.3 shows median age at first union and at first marriage, the solid line representing the former and the broken line the latter. As expected, they are indistinguishable for the older cohorts of men and women. The median ages start to diverge only among the cohorts born after World War II. The increasing divergence in the succeeding cohorts of both men and women reaches a high of three years in the 1961-65 birth cohort. The median age at marriage has increased considerably in the most recent cohorts. While marriages among the younger cohorts are postponed, many are cohabiting at younger ages. Nonetheless, there remains an increase in the age at first union for recent cohorts, causing them to equal or surpass the age at first marriage of the birth cohorts of the 1930s.

### *First Birth*

The arrival of a first child is an important *rite de passage* not only for a couple but also for their parents and close relatives; as they become new parents, their parents become grandparents and the roles of other relatives also change. Demographically speaking, the average age of the mother at first birth has important consequences for lifetime fertility and for the future age structure of the population to which she belongs. Grindstaff and associates have commented that the timing of a first birth in the life cycle has other significant effects, such as on alternative life courses for women in modern

**Figure 4.3 Median Age at First Union and at First Marriage by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970**



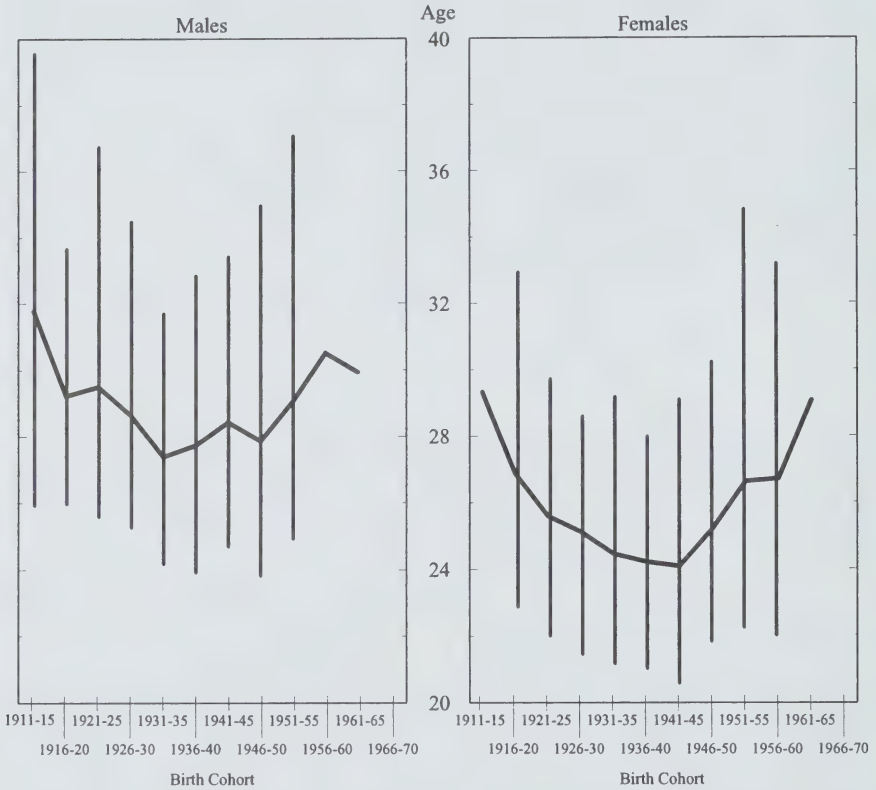
**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

society. As DeWit and Rajulton in 1992 observe, “the emergence and spread of low fertility norm and the greater use of effective contraceptives have made first birth timing less relevant to completed family size than it once was and have increased the importance of the non-demographic consequences of the age at which a woman enters parenthood. A delay in the timing of first birth allows women to take advantage of a variety of opportunities including higher education and paid work. These opportunities, in turn, have obvious implications for women’s economic independence and social status.”

In the framework of a family life course approach, it should be pointed out, the general pattern of changes observed from cohort to cohort in the transitions of leaving home, first marriage and first union holds also for the transition to parenthood.

As Figure 4.4 shows, those born in 1911-15 have the highest median age at first birth: 32.0 years for men and 29.3 for women. Another point to note is that fewer than 75% of the oldest cohort of women ever had a first birth.

**Figure 4.4 Median and Interquartile Range of Age at First Birth by Five-Year Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970**



**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

Among men, the median age declines by almost three years in the next two cohorts (1916-20 and 1921-25). The succeeding cohorts have their first child at median ages between 27.0 and 28.5 years. A significant increase occurs in the cohort born in 1951-55, to 29 years, and succeeding cohorts have their first child at still older ages, around 30 years.

The median age at first birth among women in the oldest cohort, which is at a high of 29.3 years, drops by 2.5 years in the next cohort (1916-20). Further declines occur in the succeeding cohorts until a low of 23.5 years is reached for those born in 1941-45. The median age at first birth then gradually increases until, in the 1961-65 cohort of women, it equals that of the oldest cohort (29 years).

Figures 4.1 to 4.4 make an interesting point: of all the events related to family formation, age at first birth has the widest interquartile range, implying that first births are spread over a longer interval than the other events. In particular, the widest ranges are found in the oldest cohorts and in the cohorts born during the 1950s. Although these cohorts closely resemble each other in their timing of first birth, they are in fact poles apart in the causes of this behaviour. In the oldest cohorts, childlessness and the delay of parenthood are related to the adverse circumstances in which they reached their prime childbearing ages during the Great Depression. In contrast, as Beaujot notes, the later childbearing among younger cohorts is the outcome of alternative life choices and new norms of behaviour, along with more difficult economic times.

### **Changes Related to Family Extension**

The foregoing examination of changes in family formation largely uses median age; this was possible because the life course is assumed to start with residence with parents at age 15. Since the first transition in the life course can be to any one of the four stages related to family formation, the four need not be dependent on any other event.

Subsequent events cannot use median age because they are conditional on a previous event, therefore duration measures will be used. For example, marital dissolution can be examined only among the married; the event-origin here is first marriage and the studied event is marital dissolution. At each duration since marriage, an individual is exposed to the risk of marital dissolution. Consequently, most of the summary measures in the remainder of the chapter will be median durations. For events not experienced by 50% of the cohort, other positional measures such as quartiles and percentiles will be used. Age will be included when an event also needs to be examined in that context.

#### *Second and Third Births*

The inverse relationship between age at first birth and lifetime fertility formerly observed no longer holds in modern societies, which have access to efficient methods of contraception. Trussell and Menken in 1978 found that it was still significant in the United States although it had already weakened among younger women.

In the present Canadian context, an examination of changes over the 20th century and differences between cohorts in the family life course will be emphasized. The norm of two children per family seems now to be established. Once the first child arrives, the second follows soon after, and there is a big decrease in the proportion of women who have a third child. Gee in 1986 remarks that, "it appears that a 'norm' of sorts has emerged among couples



- a small family is seen as desirable, but one child is too small... my speculation is that the majority of young women today is opting for either no or two children.”

Table 4.1 presents the quartiles corresponding to intervals between births. In the case of a first birth, duration has been measured in years since age 15, and therefore the positional measure is comparable to those presented earlier; however, ten-year birth cohorts are used in this table. For the second and third births, duration has been measured in years since the previous birth. Since childbearing among women in Canada today practically ends by age 39, the estimate for the cohort aged 30-39 is virtually final. The youngest cohort (aged 20-29) of men and women, however, has not necessarily had sufficient time for more than one birth; the measure for this cohort should therefore be considered preliminary.

Table 4.1 also gives the number of men and women at risk of having a first, second or third child, and the proportions actually having them<sup>3</sup>. The proportion of men and women without children decreases substantially from the oldest cohort, born in 1911-20, to the cohort born in 1931-40, particularly in the case of women. For the cohorts born during and after World War II, an increase in the proportion childless is observed. Fifty percent or more of the women and men born during the 1960s did not have a child, but of course they were only aged 20-29 at the time of the survey.

Of those who have a first child, at least 80% go on to have a second within five to eight years. This is implied by the proportion having second births and the third quartile of duration at second birth (Table 4.1). This finding supports the statement made earlier that people who choose to be parents generally prefer to have two children. However, the third quartile of duration at second birth for various cohorts also implies a postponement of the second birth, particularly among women in the youngest cohort.

The proportion of persons who have more than three children has diminished considerably, especially among those born after World War II. Of those who have a second child, 70% of men and women in the oldest cohort go on to have a third child, but only 45% to 50% of men and women born after 1940 do so. Simple arithmetic operations on successive parity progression ratios of various cohorts reveal the long-term trend. Since the beginning of the century, 10% to 15% of Canadians have opted for childlessness and around 20% for two children only. However, changes in fertility behaviour observed in recent cohorts suggest that, toward the end

---

<sup>3</sup> These proportions are computed from the life-table probabilities corrected for censoring and are usually called parity progression ratios. They are not simple proportions computed by dividing the number of persons who experience an event by the number who can experience it, as is usually done. The usual method ignores the problem of censoring present in the data, particularly for younger cohorts.

**Table 4.1 Positional Measures of Duration at Births of Order One to Three, and Median Age at Last Birth, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970**

	Birth Cohorts (Age at Survey in Brackets)					
	1911-1920 (Aged 70-79)	1921-1930 (Aged 60-69)	1931-1940 (Aged 50-59)	1941-1950 (Aged 40-49)	1951-1960 (Aged 30-39)	1961-1970 (Aged 20-29)
<b>Males</b>						
<b>First Birth</b>						
Sample at Risk	359	660	797	1125	1450	1425
Proportion Having First Birth <sup>1</sup>	0.82	0.82	0.87	0.83	0.77	0.50
First Quartile <sup>2</sup> Q <sub>1</sub>	11.51	10.50	9.06	9.27	10.55	11.42
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	15.16	14.15	12.19	13.03	14.75	14.00
Third Quartile Q <sub>3</sub>	22.58	21.03	17.17	19.57	24.44	--
<b>Second Birth</b>						
Sample at Risk	293	541	697	929	935	278
Proportion Having Second Birth <sup>1</sup>	0.81	0.86	0.87	0.88	0.90	0.96
First Quartile <sup>3</sup> Q <sub>1</sub>	1.96	1.78	1.61	2.13	2.20	2.09
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	3.56	2.82	2.55	3.04	3.19	3.01
Third Quartile Q <sub>3</sub>	7.37	5.78	4.64	5.11	5.29	4.78
<b>Third Birth</b>						
Sample at Risk	237	467	612	778	669	120
Proportion Having Third Birth <sup>1</sup>	0.69	0.66	0.64	0.45	0.49	0.52
First Quartile <sup>3</sup> Q <sub>1</sub>	2.17	2.24	2.20	3.45	4.25	2.72
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	4.09	4.63	4.96	--	--	6.87
Third Quartile Q <sub>3</sub>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Last Birth</b>						
Median Age	42.68	39.30	34.19	34.35	34.98	--
<b>Females</b>						
<b>First Birth</b>						
Sample at Risk	514	745	802	1134	1475	1409
Proportion Having First Birth <sup>1</sup>	0.77	0.87	0.89	0.85	0.83	0.43
First Quartile <sup>2</sup> Q <sub>1</sub>	8.05	6.68	6.12	6.19	7.15	8.54
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	12.49	9.97	8.86	9.21	11.42	14.06
Third Quartile Q <sub>3</sub>	23.00	14.13	14.08	14.81	19.31	--
<b>Second Birth</b>						
Sample at Risk	394	646	717	963	1110	442
Proportion Having Second Birth <sup>1</sup>	0.86	0.90	0.88	0.87	0.89	0.86
First Quartile <sup>3</sup> Q <sub>1</sub>	1.83	1.67	1.59	1.90	2.11	2.14
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	3.14	2.67	2.49	2.87	3.21	3.02
Third Quartile Q <sub>3</sub>	5.81	4.74	4.29	4.78	5.30	8.41
<b>Third Birth</b>						
Sample at Risk	341	583	641	831	844	207
Proportion Having Third Birth <sup>1</sup>	0.71	0.73	0.67	0.49	0.47	0.62
First Quartile <sup>3</sup> Q <sub>1</sub>	2.01	1.89	1.82	3.09	3.66	2.47
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	4.33	3.75	3.66	--	--	4.74
Third Quartile Q <sub>3</sub>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Last Birth</b>						
Median Age	39.48	35.82	31.81	30.62	32.24	--

<sup>1</sup> These proportions are computed from life table probabilities corrected for censoring.

<sup>2</sup> Duration in years measured from age 15 for first birth.

<sup>3</sup> Duration in years measured since previous birth.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

of this century, 15% to 20% of Canadians could opt for childlessness and around 35% for two children only.

Apart from technically improved means of preventing births, a major reason for the reduction in the number of children is that having children

in developed societies has become less rewarding economically and psychologically. The economic benefits the family derived in the past from children have almost vanished under modern conditions, with greater numbers of young people proceeding to higher education and consequently remaining dependent on their parents into their twenties. Yet parents have little control over their children's behaviour and little assurance of their support in old age. The increasing cost of education in terms of direct expenses and income foregone, especially for mothers who could have worked outside the home, has reduced the benefits.

Having fewer children has a consequence: from one cohort to the next, mothers are younger on average when they have their last child (see the median age given for the last birth in Table 4.1). Because there is a concentration of childbearing over a shorter span, for most men and women in the younger cohorts, the last child is either the first or the second child. The median age at the birth of the last child declines continuously until the cohort born in the 1950s. It declines from 43 years for men and 39 years for women born between 1911 and 1920 to 34 and 31 years respectively for those born during the 1940s. For Canadians born after, there is an increase in median age at last birth, particularly for women, because of the postponement of childbearing. It will not be until this cohort has completed childbearing at the end of the century that it will be possible to say whether the median age shows a definite increase.

## **Changes and Trends Related to Dissolution and Reconstitution of Families**

### *Widowhood versus Separation and Divorce*

Profound changes in the attitudes and behaviour of men and women over the course of the 20th century have resulted in an increase in the number of possible sequences in the transitions family members pass through in the life course. What were once considered exceptional are becoming now quite common, and what was once considered typical is now turning out to be more unusual. One of these profound changes involves the ways families are dissolved and reconstituted.

Families in the not-so-distant past were dissolved mainly by a spouse's death, and remarriages were rare, particularly for women. However, since the liberalization of access to divorce in 1968, transitions in the family life course have changed markedly. The family as defined in the context of social programs shows changes in its very definition. It would thus be very useful to know what changes have taken place from one cohort to another in the frequency and timing of family dissolution, and the trends they reveal, so that social programs can be geared to the economic, social and psychological needs of persons and families. The General Social Survey data on marital

**Table 4.2 Duration in Years Since the First Marriage at Its Dissolution, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970**

	Birth Cohorts (Age at Survey in Brackets)					
	1911-1920 (Aged 70-79)	1921-1930 (Aged 60-69)	1931-1940 (Aged 50-59)	1941-1950 (Aged 40-49)	1951-1960 (Aged 30-39)	1961-1970 (Aged 20-29)
<b>Males</b>						
Sample at Risk	328	617	736	1,003	1,071	423
Proportion Dissolved <sup>1</sup>	0.58	0.28	0.28	0.33	0.31	0.18
Dissolution by:						
Widowhood	0.50	0.16	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.01
Separation or Divorce	0.08	0.12	0.23	0.31	0.30	0.17
First Quartile Q <sub>1</sub>	46.88	43.94	32.55	19.84	14.98	--
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Females</b>						
Sample at Risk	461	706	767	1,046	1,216	618
Proportion Dissolved <sup>1</sup>	0.79	0.59	0.36	0.38	0.39	0.33
Dissolution by:						
Widowhood	0.73	0.46	0.15	0.04	0.04	--
Separation or Divorce	0.06	0.13	0.21	0.34	0.35	0.33
First Quartile Q <sub>1</sub>	33.41	33.22	30.06	19.69	13.11	8.29
Second Quartile Q <sub>2</sub>	48.56	48.28	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> These proportions are computed from life table probabilities corrected for censoring.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

dissolution and remarriage provide an insight into what has taken place since the beginning of the 20th century.

Table 4.2 presents the positional measures of duration from a first marriage to its dissolution, whether by the spouse's death or by separation or divorce. In the oldest cohort, 58% of men and 79% of women reported the dissolution of their marriage by the time of the survey, most by widowhood. Men's higher rate of mortality increases the risk of widowhood for women.

However, a remarkable change, especially for men, occurs in the next two cohorts. Only 28% of men in each cohort report a dissolution by the time of the survey, but the proportion separated or divorced climbs steeply, reaching 82% of marital dissolutions in the 1931-40 cohort, twice that in the 1921-30 cohort. Widowhood continues to be more common than separation or divorce for women in the 1921-30 cohort, but in the 1931-40 cohort, 58% of marital dissolutions are because of separation or divorce.

The improved health of later cohorts means that the proportion of their marriages dissolved by widowhood is negligible; almost all marital dissolutions are due to separation or divorce. The changes initiated by the



cohorts of men and women born between the Great Depression and World War II are adopted by those born during the 1940s and after, even more by women than by men. Although their marital history is not yet complete, married women of the youngest cohort show an unexpectedly high proportion separated or divorced (33%), while only 17% of married men in the same cohort have had this experience. This is probably due to the difference in their age at marriage.

The quartiles of the timing of marital dissolution (Table 4.2) have a very wide range because of the rarity of widowhood in the younger cohorts. Focusing only on the cohorts born after 1940, there is a clear indication that separations and divorces are taking place much faster, since 25% of young married Canadians experience a dissolution within 15 years of marrying.

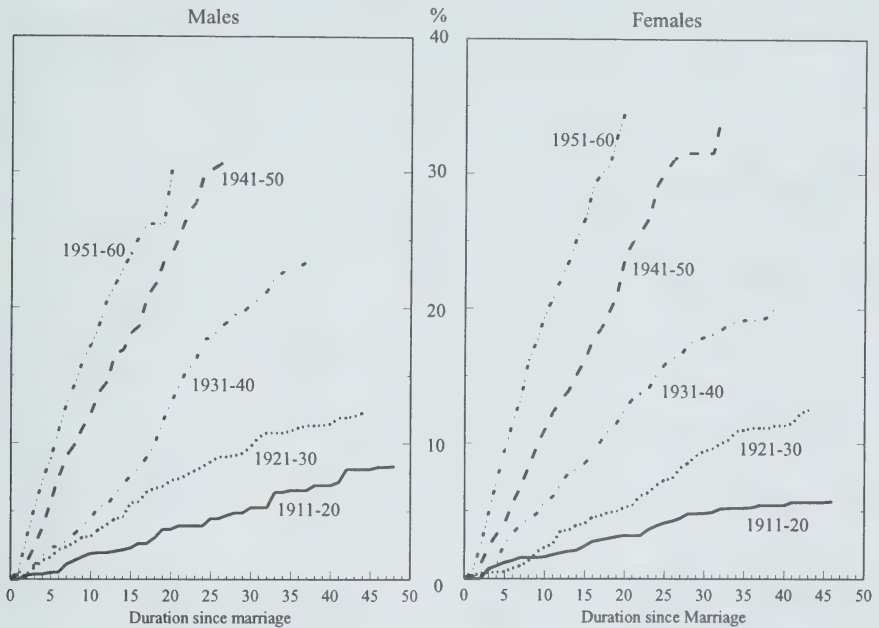
It is thus worth examining the timing of separation or divorce more closely. Table 4.3 and Figure 4.5 present detailed positional measures of timing in order to capture the experience of younger cohorts. The duration from a first marriage to a separation or divorce has steadily decreased from cohort to

**Table 4.3 Duration in Years Since First Marriage at Its Dissolution by Separation or Divorce, by Sex and Birth Cohort for a Few Percentiles, Canada, 1911 to 1970**

	Birth Cohorts (Age at Survey in Brackets)					
	1911-1920 (Aged 70-79)	1921-1930 (Aged 60-69)	1931-1940 (Aged 50-59)	1941-1950 (Aged 40-49)	1951-1960 (Aged 30-39)	1961-1970 (Aged 20-29)
<b>Males</b>						
Sample at Risk	328	617	736	1,003	1,071	423
Proportion Dissolved <sup>1</sup>	0.08	0.12	0.23	0.31	0.30	0.17
5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>5</sub>	29.31	14.42	10.62	4.62	2.86	3.29
10 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>10</sub>	--	30.32	18.00	8.05	5.52	4.31
15 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>15</sub>	--	--	21.61	12.23	8.33	6.69
20 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>20</sub>	--	--	29.54	16.61	11.63	--
25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>25</sub>	--	--	--	20.79	15.75	--
30 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>30</sub>	--	--	--	24.59	19.93	--
<b>Females</b>						
Sample at Risk	461	706	767	1,046	1,216	618
Proportion Dissolved <sup>1</sup>	0.06	0.13	0.21	0.34	0.35	0.33
5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>5</sub>	31.4	19.06	9.24	5.63	3.06	2.48
10 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>10</sub>	--	31.00	16.84	9.18	5.24	4.15
15 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>15</sub>	--	--	23.40	13.88	7.58	5.44
20 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>20</sub>	--	--	38.52	18.20	10.36	6.58
25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>25</sub>	--	--	--	20.00	13.80	8.29
30 <sup>th</sup> Percentile P <sub>30</sub>	--	--	--	24.80	16.93	9.68

<sup>1</sup> These proportions are computed from life table probabilities corrected for censoring.

**Figure 4.5 Cumulative Percentages Separated / Divorced by Sex and Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1960**



**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

cohort. Thus, among those born during the 1940s, 5% were separated or divorced within five years of marriage, 15% within 12 years, and 25% within 20 years.

An interesting feature of this analysis of marital dissolution is that women formerly took longer than men to experience a separation or divorce, while this is no longer the case for those born during the 1950s and 1960s; in fact, women have surpassed men in terms of earlier dissolutions. This change is not due to the age difference between married men and women; if this were so, it would have been evident even in the older cohorts. Rather it is due to the greater economic and social independence of younger women. As Bergmann in 1986 observes, "In matters of divorce and jobs for women, we can again see that causation runs in both directions. Conflicts about the sharing of housework in two-earner couples may make separation and divorce more likely. Women with independent access to money income are more likely to want to end a distasteful marriage. Husbands of women with earnings undoubtedly find it easier on their consciences to terminate their marriages than do husbands of housewives."

**Table 4.4 Duration in Years Since Dissolution of First Marriage at Second Marriage<sup>1</sup>, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1960**

		Birth Cohorts (Age at Survey in Brackets)				
		1911-1920 (Aged 70-79)	1921-1930 (Aged 60-69)	1931-1940 (Aged 50-59)	1941-1950 (Aged 40-49)	1951-1960 (Aged 30-39)
		<b>Males</b>				
Sample at Risk		91	131	174	265	203
Proportion Second Marriage <sup>2</sup>		0.62	0.66	0.76	0.79	0.55
10 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	P <sub>10</sub>	2.21	3.04	2.89	2.29	3.02
First Quartile	Q <sub>1</sub>	7.33	5.59	5.49	4.67	5.29
Second Quartile	Q <sub>2</sub>	30.76	16.20	10.88	11.86	10.86
Third Quartile	Q <sub>3</sub>	--	--	27.88	22.59	--
		<b>Females</b>				
Sample at Risk		257	274	216	302	301
Proportion Second Marriage <sup>2</sup>		0.24	0.34	0.55	0.67	0.58
10 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	P <sub>10</sub>	5.62	4.53	4.19	4.30	3.12
First Quartile	Q <sub>1</sub>	--	12.42	8.09	7.52	4.80
Second Quartile	Q <sub>2</sub>	--	--	27.01	19.88	11.28
Third Quartile	Q <sub>3</sub>	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Widowed or divorced only.

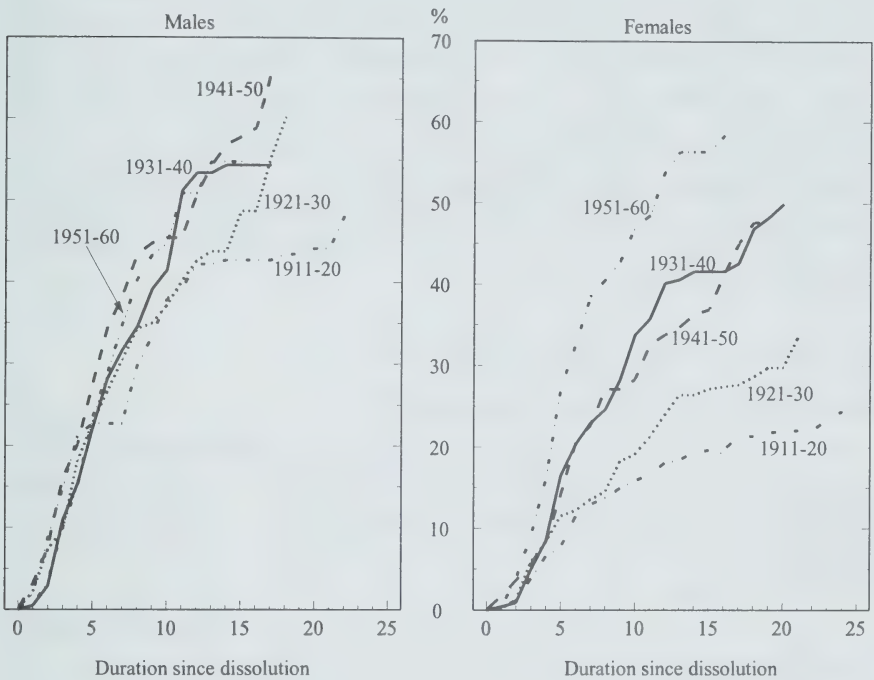
<sup>2</sup> These proportions are computed from life table probabilities corrected for censoring.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

If the proportion of marriages that are dissolved has increased from cohort to cohort, then what is happening to the reconstitution of families after? Table 4.4 presents some statistics on the duration from the break-up of the first marriage to the beginning of the second. The proportion remarried in this table shows that remarriage is more common among men than women. In the oldest cohort, there are 40 percentage points of difference between men and women. This difference has diminished for later cohorts, but the prospects of remarriage are still greater for men than women. However, women's prospects increase faster than men's from cohort to cohort so that, in the youngest cohort, the proportions of men and women remarried are almost the same.

To highlight the changes that have occurred among women, Figure 4.6 plots the cumulative proportion remarried by duration since the dissolution of the first marriage. This figure, taken together with Figure 4.5, emphasizes that as separation and divorce are becoming commonplace so too is remarriage. The prevalence of remarriage has given rise to some optimistic views among demographers that people are not abandoning the institution of marriage. In effect, the discussions of remarriage tend to emphasize that

**Figure 4.6 Cumulative Percentages Remarried by Sex and Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1960**



**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

most divorced persons remarry, implying a preference for the married state, without analysing the variations in the period between marriages and in the extent of remarriage.

Some researchers like Mott and Moore in 1983 who have examined chain effects in the life course have depicted the determinants of remarriage as mirror images of the determinants of divorce. Factors affecting remarriage are the same as those affecting divorce, but they exercise an opposite influence. For example, the economic independence conferred by an increase in the earnings of women encourages a divorce but deters a remarriage because of fewer expected gains. Physical attractiveness, which presumably lowers the probability of marital dissolution, raises the probability of remarriage, and so on.

The notion of mirror images is based on the assumption of a dichotomy between marriage and career. Remarriage is important for a woman who is unemployed or earns a low wage and who wants to stay home and raise children, but a woman earning a high wage or who has a career has little



incentive to remarry unless her partner is willing to relieve her of household responsibilities. Recent studies, however, argue that marriage and career can be complementary rather than mutually exclusive. For example, Cherlin and Walters say that “combining home and market roles is becoming the norm rather than the exception for women reaching adulthood in the 1970s and 1980s”. Remarriage, like a first marriage, has changed function; from an institution for economic production, shared consumption and education, it has become a means by which people fulfil their needs for romantic love, happiness, intimacy and self-fulfilment. In the words of Uhlenberg in 1989, “as the functions of marriage move from more instrumental to more expressive ones, there is no reason to assume that motivation of individuals to re-enter marriage should decline”.

## **Changes Related to the Launching of Children**

### *The First Child in the Family Leaves Home*

The family life course which starts with leaving home also ends with leaving home, that of children. A child's leaving home makes another important *rite de passage* both for the parents and the child. Depending on the birth order of the child, the event may herald the arrival of the empty nest for the parents.

Table 4.5 presents positional measures for the age of respondents when a child in their family first leaves home. As in the case of their own home-leaving, respondents may not have correctly understood the survey question, and measures will be distorted to the extent that a child's first departure is not in fact the final departure.

As younger cohorts cannot have experienced this event, Table 4.5 excludes those aged 30-39 and 20-29 at the time of the survey. The table shows a downward trend in parents' age when a child leaves home for the first time. For example, the age at which 10% of men respondents experience a child's leaving home has steadily declined from the oldest cohort, from around age 43 to around age 37 among those who were born during the 1940s. This is partly due to the younger age at which the cohorts born in the 1930s and 1940s had children.

Normally, as is shown in most cohorts, men are older than women when a child leaves home. One exception is the 1941-50 cohort (those aged 40-49 at the time of the survey); here women at the 5th percentile are older. This shift, which is even more marked in the cohort aged 30-39 at the time of the survey (data not shown here), is due to the higher incidence of separation and divorce in the younger cohorts. When the custody of children is entrusted to women, as it usually is, men seem to report their loss of custody as children leaving home. Women's reporting, therefore, is more accurate than men's.

**Table 4.5 Positional Measures of Age at First and Last Home-Leaving of Children, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1950**

		Birth Cohorts (Age at Survey in Brackets)							
		1911-20 (70-79)	1921-30 (60-69)	1931-40 (50-59)	1941-50 (40-49)	1911-20 (70-79)	1921-30 (60-69)	1931-40 (50-59)	1941-50 (40-49)
		Males				Females			
Sample at Risk Proportion Experiencing the Event <sup>1</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile      P <sub>5</sub> 10 <sup>th</sup> Percentile    P <sub>10</sub> First Quartile     Q <sub>1</sub> Second Quartile   Q <sub>2</sub> Third Quartile    Q <sub>3</sub>		First Home-leaving							
		295	545	702	935	397	651	723	969
		0.92	0.94	0.88	0.61	0.97	0.96	0.90	0.65
		40.6	39.2	37.7	31.3	37.2	36.4	36.0	35.8
		42.8	41.1	39.5	37.5	38.6	38.4	37.5	37.8
		46.3	44.7	43.0	42.9	41.9	40.8	40.5	41.3
		50.5	48.9	47.6	47.4	46.1	44.7	44.7	46.5
		56.2	54.0	52.7	--	51.3	48.5	49.7	--
		Last Home-leaving							
		295	545	702	935	397	651	723	969
Sample at Risk Proportion Experiencing the Event <sup>1</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile      P <sub>5</sub> 10 <sup>th</sup> Percentile    P <sub>10</sub> First Quartile     Q <sub>1</sub> Second Quartile   Q <sub>2</sub>		0.57	0.66	0.48	0.24	0.60	0.64	0.62	0.30
		50.4	47.3	44.9	41.8	46.8	45.4	43.2	41.6
		52.4	49.9	47.5	44.9	48.8	47.9	46.3	43.8
		57.6	55.5	51.6	--	54.7	53.2	50.8	48.6
		69.1	63.4	--	--	64.0	61.2	56.9	--

<sup>1</sup> These proportions are computed from life table probabilities corrected for censoring.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

Various researchers have commented on the downward trend in the age of children's leaving home. For example, Hareven in 1980 observes that "two important discontinuities have emerged in the middle and later years of life: the 'empty nest' in a couple's middle age and mandatory retirement in their old age. The combination of earlier marriage and fewer children over all, segregation of childbearing to the early stages of the family cycle, and children's more uniformly leaving home earlier in their parents' lives, has resulted in a more widespread emergence of the empty nest as a characteristic of middle and old age." However, the analysis of information on respondents' own home-leaving shows that the downward trend has recently been reversed; young people are staying at home longer, resulting in a cluttered nest rather than an empty nest.

Zhao and associates, in a forthcoming publication, have used the information gathered by the General Social Survey on the home-leaving of respondents' children to examine the influence of family structure and parental characteristics on it. Stepchildren and adopted children leave home earlier than natural children. The presence of three or more children in a family is more conducive to early home-leaving. In addition, parents' marital status

plays a strong role. Children who live in non-traditional families (for example, who have parents who are cohabiting, or separated or divorced) leave home earlier than children in intact families. The exception is the children of a widowed parent, who stay longer, presumably because the members of these families are emotionally closer and provide more mutual support.

### *The Last Child in the Family Leaves Home*

Table 4.5 also contains data on respondents' age when their last child leaves home. The proportion experiencing the event reveals that a last home-leaving does not take place in all families. Even in the oldest cohorts, only around 60% of men and women respondents report that the last child has left home. The last child to leave home is often the youngest child in the family, and there is evidence to suggest, according to Zhao and associates, that parents exercise some pressure to get them to stay longer than other children.

A trend similar to that observed in first home-leaving is also observed here. Respondents' age at last home-leaving shows a steady decline from cohort to cohort for all percentiles. From the oldest cohorts to the cohort born during the 1940s, there is an average difference of about five years in the age at which the last home-leaving takes place. This difference may increase by the end of the 20th century due to the shorter span of childbearing in recent cohorts, born during and after the 1950s, or it may decrease due to the cluttered-nest phenomenon observed in more recent cohorts.

All these observations clearly show that children's leaving home, whether the first or the last, depends very much on the family life events experienced by parents themselves from the time the family is formed.

### **Summary**

Figures 4.7a and b display the interrelationships between various family life events for men and women, and so constitute a summary of this section. They show cumulative-proportion curves by age for three cohorts.

As the figures show, the cumulative curves for respondents' leaving home and first marriage follow each other closely in the case of the cohorts born before the end of World War II. In the younger cohorts, however, these two curves reveal a widening gap, as for the 1951-60 cohort. This observation suggests that these two events no longer take place around the same time, as they did in the past, even if the first-marriage curve still follows that of leaving home.

Home-leaving and first marriage are invariably followed by first and last birth on the age scale. This is true in all cohorts, but the interval between

first and last birth has steadily narrowed from cohort to cohort. This is obviously due to the reduction in the number of children in a family as well as the shorter span of childbearing in the younger cohorts. The cumulative-proportion curves for first and last birth in the three cohorts of women reveal the dramatic change in childbearing that has taken place among Canadian women. Figures 4.7a and b include two vertical lines drawn to the horizontal axis from the 50% point on the cumulative curves of first and last birth. In the oldest cohort, they cut the age scale at 27 years and 39 years; in other words, there is an average of 12 years from first to last birth. In the 1931-40 and 1951-60 cohorts, the interval between first and last births shrinks to about nine and five years respectively.

Because of the much wider span of childbearing experienced by the oldest cohort of women, the interval between the last birth and the first child leaving home is only nine years on average. This interval widens to about 12 years in the 1931-40 cohort. The shorter span of childbearing in the younger cohorts, coupled with children's longer stay at home for various reasons, will surely lead to a much longer "waiting stage" for parents in the near future.

As Figure 4.7b reveals, it is the 1931-40 cohort of women that shows a significant rise in separations and divorce, and the 1951-60 cohort that shows a significant increase in the first-cohabitation curve.

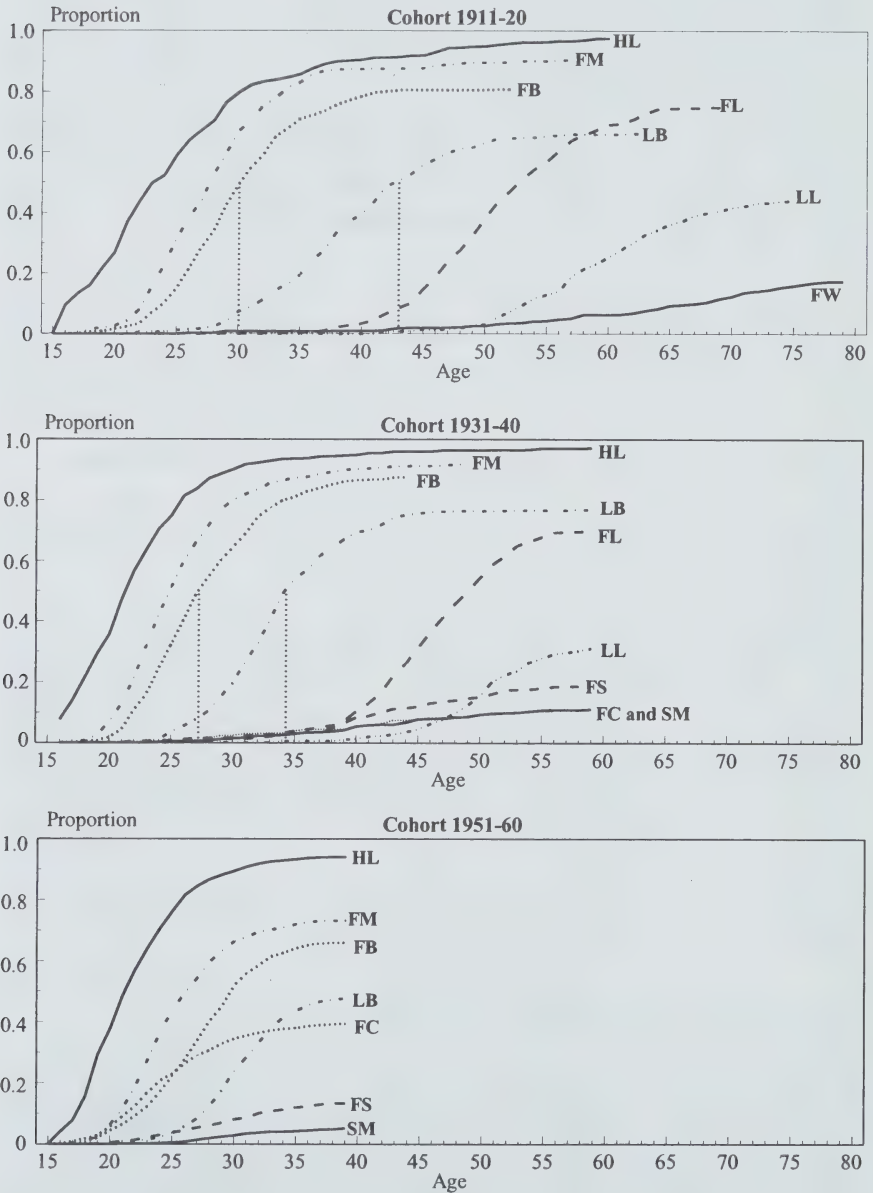
This graphical presentation of the timing of the principal events in the life course of successive cohorts implicitly shows the significant effect that demographic and social change have had on the timing and duration of stages in the life course. Two of the principal demographic changes during the 20th century have been the reduction in mortality and the reduction in average family size. Together these have resulted in a shortening of the childbearing period, a younger age at which women complete their childbearing, a younger age at which parents enter the post-parental stage, and a greater probability that parents will live through a long post-parental stage. This may change in future, however, with the cluttered-nest phenomenon observed in recent cohorts.

## **Sequences of Transitions in the Family Life Course**

Transitions from one stage of the life course to another are dependent on the transitions made in the past, whether on those considered in this analysis or those of another order. For example, the decisions to leave the parental household, marry, bear children or get divorced are dependent not only on each other but also on other individual characteristics, like education and employment. These interdependent transitions can be examined by tracing each individual's transitions. This section attempts an examination of this interdependence while restricting itself to the life-course stages discussed above. Given the multiplicity of paths individuals can follow and of sequences



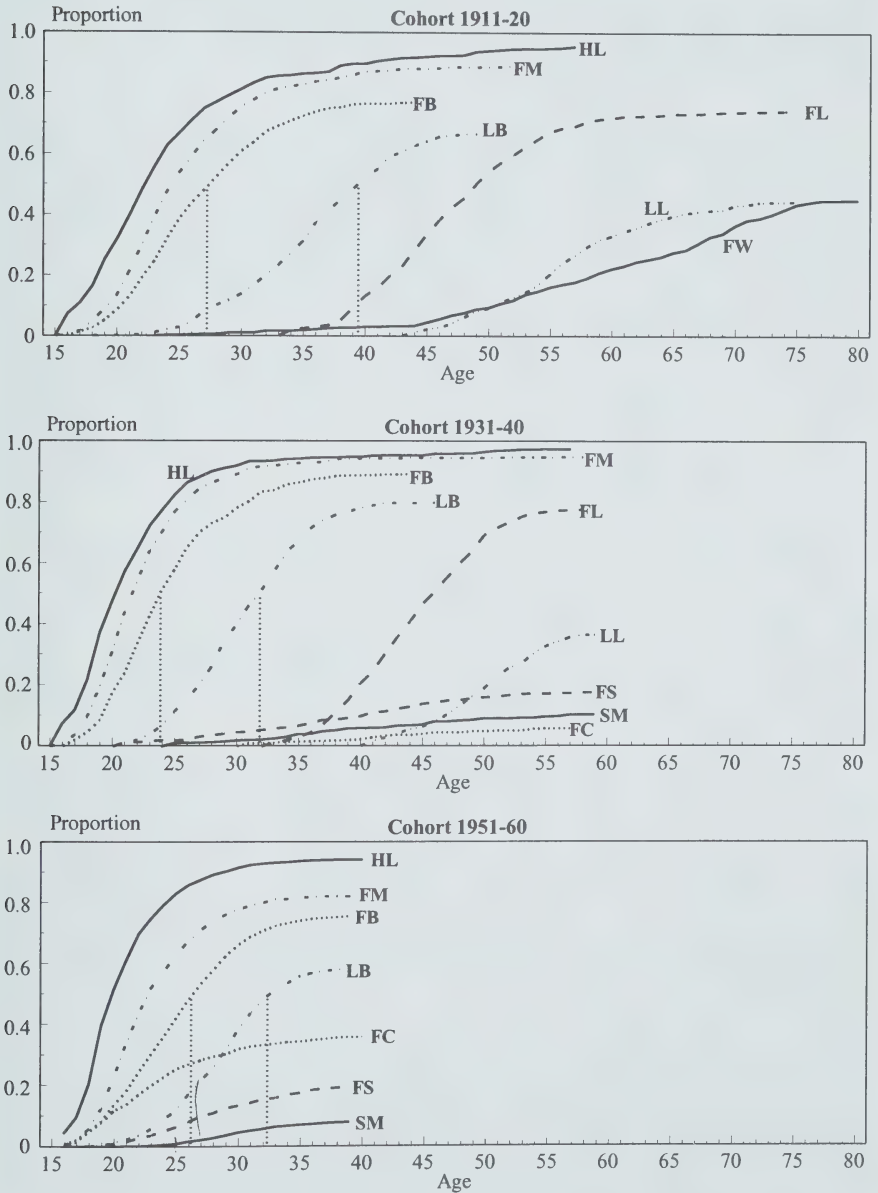
**Figure 4.7a Cumulative Proportion Experiencing Family Life Events in Selected Cohorts of Men, Canada, 1911 to 1960**



**Legend:** HL: Home-leaving; FM: First marriage; FS: Separation or divorce; FW: Widowhood; SM: Second marriage; FB: First birth; LB: Last birth; FL: First child's home-leaving; LL: Last child's home-leaving.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

**Figure 4.7b Cumulative Proportion Experiencing Family Life Events in Selected Cohorts of Women, Canada, 1911 to 1960**



**Legend:** HL: Home-leaving; FC: Cohabitation; FM: First marriage;  
FS: Separation or divorce; FW: Widowhood; SM: Second marriage;  
FB: First birth; LB: Last birth; FL: First child's home-leaving;  
LL: Last child's home-leaving.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

of transitions they can live through, only a few important sequences are presented, found in several cohorts and containing a maximum of five transitions. This does not mean that other sequences are ignored in the analytical framework; they are still there as competing transitions in the system.

A typical sequence of transitions in the family life course consists of leaving home, getting married, bearing children, and launching them to arrive at the empty nest. Another possible sequence is to marry, leave the parental home, bear children, get divorced and to remarry. Among people in the younger cohorts, a sequence of events that is becoming common is to leave home, cohabit, have a child, get married, then have a second child. One can think of many such sequences even if most of them are followed only by a few individuals. In the following discussion, a few sequences are presented that highlight the changes in Canadian society. Some interesting patterns are ruled out by the small number of individuals following them. Only those sequences which are followed by a number of individuals large enough that the terminal event is experienced by at least ten persons in each cohort are presented.

Table 4.6 shows the conditional probabilities of experiencing a specific sequence of transitions. These probabilities represent the likelihood that a given cohort will experience the five transitions in a given order. The probabilities are called "conditional" because each transition in the sequence depends on the occurrence in order of the preceding transitions. These probabilities can also be interpreted as the proportion who would experience a specific event, given that the preceding events occurred in the specified order.

For example, the first set of probabilities in Table 4.6 gives the likelihood of the typical sequence, in which the following events occur in order: leaving home, first marriage, first birth, last birth and first launching (Type I). In the oldest cohort (1911-20), 41% of men and women experience this sequence. This probability is then broken down by the conditional probabilities of the events in the sequence. Thus, the chance that leaving home is the first transition in the life course is 81%. The chance that those who have left home get married as their second transition is 87%. The chance that those who left home and got married in that order have their first child as the third event is 84%, and so on. Each of these probabilities depends on the chain of events already experienced. From the conditional probabilities of the sequence, the final probability of experiencing the entire sequence is obtained by multiplying the separate conditional probabilities. Thus, in the oldest cohort, the final probability of experiencing the typical sequence is  $0.81 \times 0.87 \times 0.84 \times 0.75 \times 0.93 = 0.41$ . If the sequence is not complete in a cohort, the final probability is not presented in the table.

It is not only the final probability but each conditional probability in the sequence that sheds light on changes in the transitions of the life course.

**Table 4.6 Probabilities of Transitions According to Four Types of Sequence, by Sex and Birth Cohort, Canada, 1911 to 1970**

Sequence Type	Birth Cohorts (Age at Survey in Brackets)					
	1911-1920 (Aged 70-79)	1921-1930 (Aged 60-69)	1931-1940 (Aged 50-59)	1941-1950 (Aged 40-49)	1951-1960 (Aged 30-39)	1961-1970 (Aged 20-29)
<b>Males</b>						
<b>Number at Risk (Sample Size)</b>	362	665	803	1,134	1,461	1,436
<b>Type I</b>	0.41	0.48	0.45	0.46	--	--
Home-leaving	0.81	0.80	0.82	0.80	0.82	0.74
First Marriage	0.87	0.89	0.88	0.79	0.54	0.41
First Birth	0.84	0.86	0.91	0.87	0.88	0.88
Last Birth	0.75	0.84	0.87	0.84	0.90	0.94
Child's Home-leaving	0.93	0.93	0.79	0.41	--	--
<b>Type II</b>	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.01	--	--
First Marriage	0.17	0.17	0.12	0.12	0.07	0.03
Home-leaving	0.54	0.50	0.70	0.49	0.51	0.33
First Birth	0.72	0.80	0.94	0.88	0.77	--
Last Birth	0.64	0.84	0.90	0.84	0.94	--
Child's Home-leaving	0.99	0.73	0.82	0.33	--	--
<b>Type III</b>	--	--	0.06	0.05	0.02	--
Home-leaving	--	--	0.82	0.80	0.82	0.74
First Marriage	--	--	0.88	0.79	0.54	0.41
First Birth	--	--	0.91	0.87	0.88	0.88
Last Birth	--	--	0.87	0.84	0.90	0.94
First Separation or Divorce	--	--	0.10	0.10	0.06	--
<b>Type IV</b>	--	--	--	0.04	0.13	0.21
Home-leaving	--	--	--	0.80	0.82	0.74
First Cohabitation	--	--	--	0.13	0.38	0.49
First Marriage	--	--	--	0.84	0.67	0.71
First Birth	--	--	--	0.63	0.81	0.96
Last Birth	--	--	--	0.68	0.79	0.94
<b>Females</b>						
<b>Number at Risk (Sample Size)</b>	518	752	811	1,144	1,488	1,424
<b>Type I</b>	0.41	0.46	0.48	0.53	--	--
Home-leaving	0.76	0.76	0.78	0.81	0.77	0.73
First Marriage	0.86	0.92	0.93	0.85	0.62	0.38
First Birth	0.82	0.89	0.92	0.88	0.90	0.83
Last Birth	0.84	0.83	0.89	0.87	0.88	0.89
Child's Home-leaving	0.91	0.89	0.82	0.44	--	--
<b>Type II</b>	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.03	--	--
First Marriage	0.20	0.21	0.19	0.16	0.11	0.04
Home-leaving	0.57	0.40	0.50	0.49	0.59	0.63
First Birth	0.76	0.91	0.86	0.92	0.77	--
Last Birth	0.80	0.84	0.86	0.87	0.84	--
Child's Home-leaving	0.92	0.84	0.85	0.43	--	--
<b>Type III</b>	--	--	0.06	0.09	0.06	--
Home-leaving	--	--	0.78	0.81	0.77	0.73
First Marriage	--	--	0.93	0.85	0.62	0.38
First Birth	--	--	0.92	0.88	0.90	0.83
Last Birth	--	--	0.89	0.87	0.88	0.89
First Separation or Divorce	--	--	0.10	0.17	0.18	--
<b>Type IV</b>	--	--	--	0.01	0.12	0.17
Home-leaving	--	--	--	0.81	0.77	0.73
First Cohabitation	--	--	--	0.08	0.31	0.56
First Marriage	--	--	--	0.50	0.75	0.67
First Birth	--	--	--	0.62	0.78	0.70
Last Birth	--	--	--	0.49	0.85	0.88

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

The Type I sequence, for example, was followed by 40% to 50% of men and women born before the 1940s. If one were to include in the sequence the launching of a last child, this is reduced to 25% to 35% (see Ravanera



et al., 1993). Many of the men and women born during the 1950s have not yet arrived at the stage of a child's leaving home; for this cohort, therefore, the conditional probability of the sequence ending with first launching is only 40%.

However, each probability associated with the transitions in the Type I sequence is very high, suggesting that each transition in the sequence is almost certain given that the preceding ones have occurred. There is a minor change, however, in the two youngest cohorts. These men and women have a much smaller probability of marrying as the event immediately following leaving home; in particular, the chance for women in the youngest cohort is only 38%. This is because other competing events (such as cohabitation) have entered their lives (Type IV).

About 80% of Canadian men and women leave home as the first transition in their life course; this is as true for younger as for older cohorts. In the older cohorts, of those born before 1950, 12% to 20% of men and women marry before leaving the parental home. However, marriage is disappearing as the first transition in the younger cohorts. This can be seen in Type II in Table 4.6, which is a slight variation on the Type I sequence in that marriage precedes leaving home. Once these two events have taken place, the other events in the sequence follow with probabilities as high as those found in the Type I sequence.

The next sequence in the table (Type III) has been selected to bring into focus the changes that have almost become established in the younger cohorts and which will probably continue into the future. This sequence brings separation and divorce into the family life course. There is a 10% to 20% chance that a separation or divorce will replace the departure of the first child as the final event in the typical pattern (leaving home, marriage and childbearing). Therefore, in this sequence, all conditional probabilities are the same as in the typical sequence, except the last event of marital dissolution. As the probabilities reveal, this sequence was initiated by men and women born during the Depression and was subsequently emulated by the younger cohorts. Women born after the 1940s show a greater likelihood of experiencing this sequence, and the trend may be sustained in the youngest cohort of women.

The last sequence in the table (Type IV) highlights recent changes. This sequence includes cohabitation as one of the stages. Cohabitation following leaving home was initiated by men and women born around World War II, and was subsequently picked up more vigorously by successive cohorts, of women in particular. The gradual increase from 13% to 38% to 49% in the chance that men will cohabit as the first transition after that of leaving home is not as spectacular as the increase from 8% to 31% to 56% among women; thus women are catching up with men in terms of following this pattern of

transitions in the family life course. It is also worth noting that marriage and childbearing follow cohabitation with as high a probability in this sequence as in the Type I sequence.

For reasons of space, not all the sequences involving cohabitation are included here. Neither can the later stages of the life course, such as widowhood and remarriage, be discussed in more detail. These transitions occur at various stages of the life course and their inclusion would require the examination of sequences of a higher order.

## **Conclusion**

About 40% to 50% of Canadians go through the so-called typical life-course stages, involving home leaving, marriage, childbearing and the first child's leaving home within an intact first marriage. Deviations from the typical sequence have already occurred, and more deviations will surely occur in the future.

There are two main sources of these deviations: one is the increasing frequency of marital disruption through separation or divorce, and the second is the increasing frequency of common-law unions at all stages of the life course. If remarriage becomes more common, it will make the sequence of transitions in the family life course more complicated than it already is. The changes observed in the behaviour of recent cohorts in terms of reproduction and marriage will result in significant changes in the transitions of the family life course toward the end of the 20th century and into the next.

All the changes and trends observed from cohort to cohort are consistent in pointing to a particular feature of the transformation of Canadian society: women have emerged as the key agents of change in all aspects of the family life course. Delay in marriage provides women, as it has men, with an opportunity to establish themselves educationally and occupationally. Shorter childbearing and childrearing periods give women and men a greater opportunity to opt for roles other than parenthood. The option of unions other than legal marriages also enhances this flexibility. If marital disruptions occur, there is a greater chance of forming new unions after. All these changes in the last four decades of the 20th century have overturned established traditions.

Rodgers and Witney (1981), who have studied the family life cycle in 20th-century Canada following the work of Glick in the United States, stress that the changes "which may be anticipated in marital status and in fertility in the future Canadian family do not appear to be of the kind which will produce major disruptions in the family career. Indeed, they appear to be of the sort which provides some increase in individual choice, while maintaining the central importance of the family in Canadian society." (p.737) They decide cautiously not "to assert an established trend until the 1991

Census has given somewhat more long-term data on the cohorts who were only entering the marital and childbearing period of the family cycle in 1971” (p.735).

The latest data available, such as the 1991 census and the 1990 General Social Survey, have been used here. The changes found from one cohort to another and the trends they show should make obvious the radical changes which have taken place in the Canadian family, and which continue in the younger cohorts now reaching the stage of forming a family. Clearly it is no longer possible to speak of a “typical” family life course. As this introduces both more opportunities and more uncertainties into people’s lives, it most certainly complicates the work of analysts.

## **Methodology Note**

### **The Life-Table Approach to Censored Life Histories**

Life histories gathered by prospective or retrospective surveys pose a problem at the stage of analysis. This problem is known in the statistical literature as censoring, a term which refers to the individual incomplete histories collected by surveys. Censoring affects the commonly used procedures for computing summary measures like mean age at first marriage or median duration between first marriage and marital dissolution. The following paragraphs explain how censoring creates biases in calculating these summary measures and how life-table techniques can be used to correct them.

With incomplete histories, it is not possible to compute the true averages because an individual history is truncated at the time of survey. This is particularly true for younger cohorts, many of whose members would not have had sufficient time to experience a specific event under study. As an illustration, consider the first marriage of men aged 30-39 at the time of the General Social Survey, 1990. Some of these men would have been married before the survey date, but others would marry for the first time only after the survey. Thus, the marriages of those married by the time of the survey will be recorded but the subsequent ones will go unrecorded.

Table 4.7 presents the observed first marriages of men in this sample aged 30-39 at the time of survey. It is assumed that all men in this cohort are single at age 15. The first column in Table 4.7 gives age intervals from the start of the marriage process. The second column gives the number of men at risk of marriage at the beginning of each age interval. At age 15, there are 1,461 single men who are all members of this cohort. Since no marriages are recorded between ages 15 and 16 (see column 3), the 1,461 men find themselves in the same single status at the beginning of the next age

**Table 4.7 Data and First Marriage Table for Persons Aged 30-39 at the Survey**

Age	Observation			Table			
	Single <sup>1</sup>	Marriages <sup>2</sup>	Censored Data <sup>3</sup>	Person-Years <sup>4</sup>	Rate <sup>5</sup>	Probability <sup>6</sup>	Single <sup>7</sup>
15	1,461	-	...	1,461	-	-	1,000
16	1,461	5	...	1,459	0.003	0.003	1,000
17	1,456	10	...	1,451	0.007	0.007	997
18	1,446	20	...	1,436	0.014	0.014	990
19	1,426	55	...	1,399	0.039	0.039	976
20	1,371	76	...	1,333	0.057	0.055	938
21	1,295	104	...	1,243	0.084	0.080	886
22	1,191	127	...	1,128	0.113	0.107	815
23	1,064	129	...	1,000	0.129	0.121	728
24	935	110	...	880	0.125	0.118	640
25	825	84	...	783	0.107	0.102	565
26	741	72	...	705	0.102	0.097	507
27	669	79	...	630	0.125	0.118	458
28	590	53	...	564	0.094	0.090	404
29	537	45	...	515	0.087	0.084	368
30	492	23	85	438	0.053	0.051	337
31	384	25	50	347	0.072	0.070	320
32	309	9	52	279	0.032	0.032	297
33	248	12	45	220	0.055	0.053	288
34	191	14	38	165	0.085	0.081	273
35	139	11	23	122	0.090	0.086	250
36	105	6	37	84	0.072	0.069	229
37	62	2	26	48	0.042	0.041	213
38	34	-	19	25	-	-	204
39	15	-	15	8	-	-	204
Total	...	1,071	390	...	...	...	...

<sup>1</sup> Number entering this interval as single.

<sup>2</sup> Number married in the interval.

<sup>3</sup> Number censored in the interval.

<sup>4</sup> Person-years of exposure.

<sup>5</sup> Age-specific rate (corrected).

<sup>6</sup> Age-specific probability.

<sup>7</sup> Single persons of the life table.

**Source:** General Social Survey, 1990.

interval 16-17. Five marriages occur in this age interval and therefore the number single at the beginning of the next age interval is reduced by five to 1,456. Proceeding in this manner, the number at risk at the beginning of each age interval is obtained by subtracting the number of marriages taking place in the previous<sup>4</sup> age interval from the number single.

The number of men whose marital history is truncated by the survey, and therefore incomplete, is shown in the fourth column of the table for each

<sup>4</sup> From observations affected by disturbances such as emigration and immigration, we compute a table that assumes no disturbance. There is no other exit from the status and consequently the decrease in the number of singles is only through marriage.



age. Since these men are aged 30-39 at the survey date, their marital history can be truncated or censored only from age 30. Marital histories of a total of 390 men are thus incomplete. Thus, from age 30, the number at risk of marriage (the second column) is computed by subtracting the number of marriages as well as the number of censored individuals in a given age interval. Thus, for example, the number at risk of marriage at the end of the age interval 30-31 will be  $492 - (23 + 85) = 384$ .

When censoring is present, calculating the measures of tendency like mean, median and quartiles in the usual manner from the number of marriages will result in an underestimate. This is because only the recorded marriages, and not the marriages that would occur after the survey date, are included in such a computation. Age at first marriage is equivalent to the time spent unmarried. Thus, when later marriages are excluded while computing the average measures, the length of time spent unmarried by the unmarried members of the cohort is also excluded, and thus the average will be downwardly biased.

This bias can be corrected at the cost of a few simple assumptions and the use of rates. To illustrate this, consider first the age interval 20-21 where there is no censoring. The procedure described below can be adapted to the age interval 30-31 where censoring begins. The marriage rate for the age interval 20-21 is the ratio of the observed number of marriages between ages 20 and 21 to the number of person-years lived in the interval by unmarried men. In the age interval 20-21, there are 76 observed marriages. Each man who does not marry in the interval contributes nothing to the numerator and one person-year to the denominator. Each man marrying in the interval contributes one marriage to the numerator and something less than one person-year to the denominator (because he is unmarried at the start of the interval but is married before it ends). If marriages are equally distributed over the interval, each man who marries contributes on average half a person-year to the denominator. Therefore, the total number of person-years contributed by both the married and unmarried men equals 1,333 (that is,  $1,371 - 76 = 1,295$  person-years from unmarried men, and  $76 \div 2 = 38$  person-years from marrying men). With these values, the marriage rate for the interval 20-21 is:  $76 \div 1,333 = 0.057$ . The fifth column of the table shows the person-years lived in bachelorhood for each age interval, and the sixth column the corresponding rates.

Now consider the age interval 30-31 where censoring starts to occur. Twenty-three men marry in this age interval and thus contribute one marriage each to the numerator of the rate. Again, on the assumption of an even distribution of marriages throughout the interval, each man who marries contributes half a person-year to the denominator (a total of 11.5 person-years). Those who do not marry and move on to the next age interval contribute one full year to the denominator and nothing to the numerator.

In addition, there are 85 single men aged 30 whose marital history is truncated by the survey. These men also contribute some person-years to the denominator but nothing to the numerator. If on average they contribute half a person-year, the denominator is increased by  $85 \div 2 = 42.5$  person-years. Thus, the denominator has 438 person-years ( $384 + 11.5 + 42.5$ ). It is important to note that all the available information, including the censored information, is used in calculating the marriage rate for this age interval. The rate is thus  $23 \div 438 = 0.0525$ , which is shown rounded to 0.053 in the sixth column of the table. The age-specific probabilities of marriage given in the seventh column of the table are found by applying the usual formula for turning rates into probabilities. Denoting the rate and the probability for an age interval  $(x, x+1)$  by  $r_x$  and  $p_x$  respectively,  $p_x = 2 r_x \div (2+r_x)$ . The probability for the age interval 30-31 is thus  $(2 \times 0.0525) \div (2 + 0.0525) = 0.051$ .

Median age at first marriage is calculated from the frequency distribution of first marriages of a life table. From the age-specific probabilities (seventh column), the probability of surviving unmarried from age 15 to a specific age can be computed. These probabilities are known as survival probabilities and are obtained by successive multiplications of the age-specific probabilities of not marrying (that is,  $1 - p_x$ ) between the age of 15 and a specific age. These survival probabilities multiplied by 1,000 are shown in the eighth column of the table. The number 1,000 is arbitrary in the sense that one can use 1, 10 or 100,000 instead of 1,000. This number is called the radix of a life table. At what age 10%, 25%, 50% or 75% of the men in this cohort are married can be found from the figures in the last column. For example, according to the table, 89% of men remain unmarried at age 21<sup>5</sup>; or equivalently, 11% are married before age 21. In the same way, 50.7% are unmarried at age 26 and 45.8% at age 27. The median age is that at which 50% of the men are unmarried. It can be found by a simple interpolation between the two values. Other measures such as quartiles, deciles and percentiles can be calculated in the same way. These measures are useful particularly when fewer than 50% of the members of a cohort experience an event.

The life-table procedure can be used to analyse any non-recurring event, like first marriage. Bearing a child becomes a non-recurring event when it is identified by its order, such as first birth, second birth, and so on. In the case of births, it is often more interesting to take the preceding birth as the origin-event and to calculate the duration since. Always, the main idea underlying the life table is a transition between two statuses. First marriage, for example, is an event implying a transition between the statuses single and married.

A life table is called a single-decrement life table if the number of individuals who comprise the radix<sup>6</sup> is diminished only by the event studied,

<sup>5</sup>  $1000 \times (1 - 0.003) \times (1 - 0.007) \times (1 - 0.014) \times (1 - 0.039) \times (1 - 0.055) = 886$ .

<sup>6</sup> In this example, the radix is 1,000 singles at age 15.

to the exclusion of another. One can extend the ideas to multiple-decrement life tables, where several events can be considered together (marriage and common-law unions, for example). Decrement tables only allow exits from the status under study. More elaborate increment-decrement life tables can also be constructed for processes involving more than two statuses, where both exits from statuses and entries into statuses can be considered. The use of life tables for analysing life-history data is therefore of immense value.

## Appendices



**Table A1.1 Population Aged 15-29 By Marital Status, Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921 to 1991 (in Percent)**

Year	Males			Females		
	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29
<b>Single</b>						
1921	99.4	81.9	47.7	93.3	57.0	28.7
1931	99.7	85.6	52.2	94.9	63.1	32.4
1941	99.5	83.7	49.7	94.3	61.0	32.9
1951	99.0	74.4	35.1	92.1	48.5	20.7
1961	98.7	69.5	29.6	91.3	40.5	15.4
1971	98.4	67.6	25.6	92.5	43.5	15.4
1981	98.4	71.9	32.0	93.3	51.1	20.0
1991	98.7	81.6	45.7	95.6	64.6	29.7
<b>Married</b>						
1921	0.6	17.9	51.5	6.6	42.4	69.5
1931	0.3	14.3	47.3	5.1	36.6	66.7
1941	0.5	16.2	49.9	5.7	38.8	66.4
1951	1.0	25.5	64.6	7.9	51.2	78.5
1961	1.3	30.4	70.1	8.7	59.2	83.8
1971	1.4	32.0	73.3	7.3	55.7	82.5
1981	1.5	27.8	66.3	6.6	48.0	76.8
1991	1.2	18.2	53.0	4.3	34.8	67.8
<b>Widowed</b>						
1921	-	0.2	0.7	-	0.6	1.6
1931	-	0.1	0.5	-	0.3	0.9
1941	-	0.1	0.3	-	0.2	0.6
1951	-	-	0.2	-	0.2	0.5
1961	-	-	0.1	-	0.2	0.4
1971	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	-	0.5
1981	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
1991	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.2
<b>Divorced</b>						
1921	-	-	0.1	-	0.1	0.1
1931	-	-	0.1	-	-	0.1
1941	-	-	0.1	-	-	0.1
1951	-	-	0.1	-	-	0.1
1961	-	0.1	0.2	-	0.1	0.2
1971	-	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.9
1981	-	0.3	1.6	-	0.8	2.9
1991	-	0.2	1.3	-	0.5	2.4

Source: Basavarajappa, K.G. (1978). *Marital Status and Nuptiality in Canada*, Catalogue No. 99-704, Statistics Canada, Ottawa,

**Table A1.2 Percentage Married in the Population Aged 15-29 By Age Group, Sex, Mother Tongue and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1971, 1981 and 1991**

	15-19			20-24			25-29			15-29		
	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991
<b>Mother Tongue</b>												
<b>Males</b>												
English	1.7	1.6	1.1	33.0	27.9	17.7	71.6	63.1	52.5	30.9	29.4	25.1
French	0.9	1.2	1.2	26.8	27.5	22.3	70.6	65.5	56.1	29.6	31.0	28.9
Other	1.8	1.3	0.9	27.6	22.0	14.2	64.0	61.4	47.5	33.2	30.5	24.1
<b>Females</b>												
English	7.8	6.8	3.9	55.0	45.7	31.8	79.8	72.1	64.5	43.6	40.5	35.5
French	4.3	5.8	5.4	47.4	49.1	40.7	77.2	72.9	68.1	39.0	42.6	41.7
Other	10.1	6.2	3.6	59.5	47.8	30.4	82.6	77.2	62.8	53.8	46.9	36.9
<b>Educational Attainment</b>												
<b>Males</b>												
Elementary	2.6	2.1	2.2	33.4	33.1	22.6	65.9	59.2	50.0	33.6	27.7	23.8
Secondary	1.2	1.4	1.0	32.2	30.2	22.2	72.0	67.0	55.2	24.2	24.5	21.3
Post Secondary	2.4	2.6	1.8	38.5	29.2	20.5	75.4	68.2	56.8	52.2	42.1	37.0
Non-university												
University	1.3	0.6	0.9	20.7	17.0	9.7	66.2	55.3	44.4	36.7	35.4	26.2
<b>Females</b>												
Elementary	12.6	9.8	8.3	64.1	56.2	44.1	81.9	72.8	61.1	56.1	45.8	36.5
Secondary	6.3	6.4	3.7	57.6	56.3	44.3	81.9	78.5	70.1	39.1	38.8	32.3
Post Secondary	11.9	7.0	7.2	51.1	43.1	36.8	76.7	72.1	66.6	56.7	48.3	48.4
Non-university												
University	2.6	3.5	2.5	33.8	27.5	18.5	69.7	63.5	57.2	40.2	42.1	35.3
<b>Total</b>												
Males	1.5	1.5	1.1	30.6	27.3	18.3	70.3	63.5	52.6	30.8	29.9	25.9
Females	6.9	6.5	4.2	53.3	46.8	33.7	79.5	72.8	65.2	43.3	41.6	37.1

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Table A1.3 Percentage Cohabiting and Legally Married in the Population Aged 15-29 By Age Group, Sex, Mother Tongue and Educational Attainment, Canada, 1991**

	Males				Females			
	Cohabiting	Legally Married	Total in Union	Proportion in cohabitation	Cohabiting	Legally Married	Total in Union	Proportion in cohabitation
<b>15-19</b>								
<b>Mother Tongue</b>								
English	0.7	0.4	1.1	63.6	2.7	1.2	3.9	69.2
French	0.9	0.3	1.2	75.0	4.5	0.9	5.4	83.3
Other	0.3	0.6	0.9	33.3	1.3	2.3	3.6	36.1
<b>Education</b>								
Elementary	1.8	0.4	2.2	81.8	5.3	3.0	8.3	63.9
Secondary	0.6	0.4	1.0	60.0	2.6	1.1	3.7	70.3
Post Secondary Non-university	1.1	0.7	1.8	61.1	5.6	1.6	7.2	77.8
University	0.5	0.4	0.9	55.6	1.8	0.7	2.5	72.0
<b>Total</b>	0.7	0.4	1.1	63.6	2.9	1.2	4.1	70.7
<b>20-24</b>								
<b>Mother Tongue</b>								
English	8.3	9.4	17.7	46.9	12.0	19.8	31.8	37.7
French	16.2	6.1	22.3	72.6	27.0	13.7	40.7	66.3
Other	3.3	10.9	14.2	23.2	4.3	26.1	30.4	14.1
<b>Education</b>								
Elementary	11.4	11.2	22.6	50.4	17.1	26.9	44.0	38.9
Secondary	11.9	10.3	22.2	53.6	19.1	25.2	44.3	43.1
Post Secondary Non-university	10.4	10.1	20.5	50.7	16.0	20.8	36.8	43.5
University	4.4	5.3	9.7	45.4	7.6	10.9	18.5	41.1
<b>Total</b>	9.4	8.9	18.3	51.4	14.4	19.3	33.7	42.7
<b>25-29</b>								
<b>Mother Tongue</b>								
English	11.6	40.9	52.5	22.1	10.8	53.7	64.5	16.7
French	26.4	29.7	56.1	47.1	26.9	41.3	68.2	39.4
Other	5.2	42.3	47.5	10.9	4.8	58.0	62.8	7.6
<b>Education</b>								
Elementary	14.4	35.7	50.1	28.7	14.2	46.9	61.1	23.2
Secondary	17.0	38.2	55.2	30.8	15.2	54.8	70.0	21.7
Post Secondary Non-university	14.4	42.3	56.7	25.4	14.3	52.3	66.6	21.5
University	9.8	34.6	44.4	22.1	11.7	45.5	57.2	20.5
<b>Total</b>	14.3	38.4	52.7	27.1	13.9	51.2	65.1	21.4
<b>15-29</b>								
<b>Mother Tongue</b>								
English	7.1	18.0	25.1	28.3	8.7	26.8	35.5	24.5
French	15.4	13.4	28.8	53.5	20.5	21.2	41.7	49.2
Other	3.3	20.9	24.2	13.6	3.7	33.2	36.9	10.0
<b>Education</b>								
Elementary	8.5	15.3	23.8	35.7	11.5	25.0	36.5	31.5
Secondary	8.0	13.3	21.3	37.6	10.0	22.3	32.3	31.0
Post Secondary Non-university	11.5	25.6	37.1	31.0	14.0	34.4	48.4	28.9
University	6.8	19.4	26.2	26.0	9.0	26.3	35.3	25.5
<b>Total</b>	8.5	17.3	25.8	32.9	10.8	26.3	37.1	29.1

Source: Public Use Microdata File, 1991 Census of Canada.

**Table A1.4 Percentage Distribution of Ever-Married Women 15-29 By Children Ever-Born by Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1941 to 1991**

Year	Children Ever-born						At Least One Child	Number of Children per 1,000 Women
	0	1	2	3	4	5 +		
1941 1961 1971 1981 1991  1941 1961 1971 1981 1991  1941 1961 1971 1981 1991	15-19							
	56.0	36.0	6.9	0.9	0.1	-	44.0	531
	42.3	44.4	11.3	1.7	0.3	0.1	57.7	735
	49.7	41.2	7.3	1.0	0.3	0.4	50.3	634
	64.9	28.9	5.1	0.7	0.4	0.1	35.1	429
	68.7	25.3	5.0	0.9	0.1	-	31.3	385
	20-24							
	38.5	35.4	17.0	6.4	2.1	0.8	61.5	1,007
	26.3	34.7	24.9	10.0	3.1	1.1	73.7	1,327
	42.0	33.5	18.5	4.6	1.0	0.4	58.0	910
	54.0	27.8	14.7	2.8	0.5	0.2	46.0	687
	58.8	26.3	11.7	2.6	0.5	0.2	41.2	603
	25-29							
	26.5	28.7	21.1	11.5	6.3	5.9	73.5	1,645
	13.6	21.0	29.0	19.4	9.6	7.3	86.4	2,178
	20.7	24.3	31.7	14.9	5.4	2.9	79.3	1,706
	30.0	27.0	31.0	9.4	2.0	0.6	70.0	1,285
	38.0	27.7	24.9	7.4	1.6	0.5	62.0	1,087
	15-29							
32.5	31.5	18.8	9.0	4.4	3.7	67.5	1,351	
20.3	27.8	26.3	14.6	6.5	4.5	79.7	1,756	
31.4	29.2	24.7	9.7	3.2	1.7	68.6	1,307	
40.7	27.4	23.6	6.5	1.3	0.4	59.3	1,018	
44.8	27.2	20.5	5.9	1.2	0.4	55.2	928	

**Note:** 1941 excludes Newfoundland. Excludes women for whom age at first marriage was not stated and women for whom the number of children ever born was not stated.

**Sources:** 1941: Census of Canada, Table 51; 1961: Census of Canada, Bulletin 4.1-7, Table G 1; 1971 Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-718, Bulletin 1.2-6, Table 24; 1981: Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 92-906, Table 1 and 2; 1991: Census of Canada, Catalogue No. 93-321, Table 2.



**Table A1.5 Percentage Childless among Ever-Married Women Aged 15-29 by Five-Year Age Group, Mother Tongue, Educational Attainment, Work Status and School Attendance, Canada, 1971, 1981 and 1991**

	15-19			20-24			25-29			15-29		
	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991	1971	1981	1991
<b>Mother Tongue</b>												
English	48.2	63.2	67.3	42.2	53.4	57.2	21.8	31.0	37.4	32.4	41.3	43.9
French	56.3	76.1	80.3	42.9	59.7	66.4	20.9	28.7	38.5	31.3	43.1	48.3
Other	57.1	52.1	59.8	36.1	45.2	50.4	22.4	26.7	34.6	29.7	33.8	39.6
<b>Educational Attainment</b>												
Elementary	41.0	36.3	41.4	22.1	21.6	22.3	13.0	12.4	13.3	18.2	17.3	18.5
Secondary	53.2	65.3	70.2	40.5	47.9	46.8	20.3	21.1	24.8	31.6	35.5	33.9
Post Secondary	50.0	80.4	80.4	46.4	65.9	67.5	24.3	33.0	39.6	34.0	46.5	48.2
Non-university	68.8	91.2	91.1	68.3	76.8	80.8	38.6	52.2	58.5	51.5	59.4	63.9
<b>Work Status</b>												
Full-time	78.2	87.0	84.8	69.4	76.4	76.3	47.9	50.0	53.2	59.6	61.6	59.9
Part-time	56.5	68.5	72.8	39.2	49.1	53.3	20.0	22.5	26.2	32.0	37.1	37.1
Not Employed	36.5	41.3	56.1	13.8	19.0	22.0	7.4	7.5	10.2	11.5	12.9	15.7
<b>School Attendance</b>												
Full-time	70.6	79.1	86.9	60.9	78.7	78.4	43.0	53.4	57.5	59.0	69.9	67.5
Part-time	76.2	69.0	76.9	64.8	73.4	75.3	38.0	51.5	50.5	49.9	59.7	62.9
Not Attending	46.6	63.0	61.7	39.9	51.5	54.1	20.4	27.2	34.2	30.0	38.1	40.3
<b>Total</b>												
Total	1.5	1.5	1.1	30.6	27.3	18.3	70.3	63.5	52.6	30.8	29.9	25.9

**Note:** Full-time and part-time work are defined as follows: 'Full-time' employed 40 weeks or more; 'Part-time' employed from 1 to 39 weeks.

**Source:** Public Use Microdata Files, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Table A3.1 Legal Marital Status of the Population Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921 to 1991<sup>1</sup> (in Percent)**

Age Group	Males							
	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
55-59 60-64 65-69 70-74 75-79 80-84 85+ Total 55+	Single (Never Married)							
	11.3	12.5	12.8	11.7	11.2	9.2	7.8	6.6
	11.0	12.3	12.7	11.5	11.5	9.7	7.6	6.9
	9.4	11.4	12.6	12.1	11.0	10.8	8.0	6.7
	8.8	10.9	12.2	12.1	10.7	10.9	8.4	5.6
	7.9	9.3	10.8	11.5	11.0	10.3	9.3	5.4
	7.4	8.1	9.8	10.6	10.3	10.0	9.2	5.9
	6.7	7.3	8.2	9.0	9.5	10.3	7.8	6.8
	10.1	11.5	12.3	11.7	11.1	10.0	8.1	6.4
	Married <sup>2</sup>							
	80.8	79.6	80.2	82.8	84.0	86.4	86.2	83.6
	78.0	76.7	77.1	80.1	81.0	84.3	85.5	82.7
	75.2	72.9	72.5	74.6	77.5	80.4	83.0	82.6
	69.0	66.6	65.7	67.3	72.0	75.1	78.9	81.5
	60.8	58.9	58.2	58.3	63.7	68.5	72.0	77.8
	50.6	48.5	47.9	47.4	52.4	58.1	62.1	70.0
	38.7	35.6	34.4	33.3	37.6	42.8	46.0	56.8
	74.2	72.3	72.5	73.7	75.5	80.1	80.8	80.9
	Widowed							
	7.6	7.4	6.7	5.1	4.2	2.9	2.6	2.3
	10.7	10.7	9.9	8.0	6.9	4.7	4.2	4.2
	15.2	15.4	14.6	13.0	11.1	7.7	6.7	6.6
	22.0	22.4	21.9	20.3	16.9	13.1	10.8	9.9
	31.1	31.7	30.7	30.0	25.0	20.4	17.3	14.6
	41.9	43.3	42.2	41.9	37.1	31.3	27.7	22.4
	54.3	57.0	57.3	57.6	52.7	46.4	45.6	34.8
	15.5	15.8	14.9	14.3	13.0	8.7	8.7	7.8
	Divorced							
	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.5	3.3	7.5
	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.3	2.8	6.2
	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	1.1	2.3	4.1
	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4	1.0	1.8	3.0
	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.4	2.1
	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	1.1	1.7
	0.1	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.7	1.6
	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	1.2	2.4	4.9

See notes at the end of the table.

**Table A3.1 Legal Marital Status of the Population Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Five-Year Age Group, Canada, 1921 to 1991<sup>1</sup> (in Percent) - Concluded**

Age Group	Females							
	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
55-59 60-64 65-69 70-74 75-79 80-84 85+ Total 55+	Single (Never Married)							
	10.3	10.8	9.8	10.2	10.5	9.0	6.3	5.8
	10.7	11.3	10.3	9.8	10.3	10.2	7.1	5.8
	10.0	10.8	11.0	9.6	10.1	10.7	8.5	6.0
	10.5	11.0	11.8	10.7	10.0	10.5	9.7	6.5
	10.2	10.7	11.1	11.2	9.9	10.6	10.3	7.4
	10.5	11.2	11.3	11.6	10.9	10.7	10.3	8.7
	9.8	10.4	10.4	10.5	11.0	11.1	10.3	9.9
	10.3	10.9	10.6	10.2	10.3	10.1	8.2	6.5
	Married <sup>2</sup>							
	71.2	72.1	73.1	72.7	73.0	74.8	76.8	74.5
	62.3	63.6	65.4	65.5	64.8	65.8	68.7	69.1
	53.1	53.7	55.2	56.3	55.3	55.2	57.6	61.5
	40.7	40.9	42.1	43.0	44.2	42.6	44.6	49.6
	28.8	29.1	30.1	30.2	32.7	31.0	31.2	36.4
	18.2	17.3	18.9	18.1	21.5	20.2	18.9	23.0
	10.6	9.6	10.8	8.6	11.4	11.5	8.5	11.9
	54.6	54.8	56.1	55.3	54.3	56.1	55.0	56.3
	Widowed							
	18.3	17.1	16.9	16.7	15.8	14.5	13.0	10.9
	26.9	25.1	24.1	24.4	24.4	22.6	21.1	18.2
	36.8	35.4	33.7	34.0	34.2	33.0	31.5	27.6
	48.6	48.0	46.0	46.2	45.6	46.1	44.1	40.6
	60.9	60.1	58.8	58.6	57.3	57.9	57.5	53.8
	71.1	71.5	69.7	70.2	67.2	68.8	70.2	66.7
	79.5	80.0	78.7	80.9	77.7	77.0	80.9	77.2
	34.8	34.2	33.1	34.3	34.9	32.6	34.3	32.0
	Divorced							
	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.7	3.9	8.8
	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.5	3.1	6.9
	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.1	2.4	4.9
	0.1	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7	1.7	3.3
	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.1	2.5
	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.6	1.6
	-	-	-	0.1	-	0.4	0.3	1.0
	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.2	2.4	5.2

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Newfoundland prior to 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Includes separated.

**Sources:** Censuses of Canada: 1921: Volume 2, Table 30; 1931: Volume 3, Table 12; 1941: Volume 3, Table 7; 1951: Volume 2, Table 1; 1961: Catalogue No. 92-552, Table 78; 1971: Catalogue No. 92-730, Table 1; 1981: Catalogue 92-901, Table 5; 1991: Catalogue No. 93-310, Table 3.

**Table A3.2 Marital Status Distribution of Population (in Percent) Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Canada, 1990**

Marital Status	Age Group			
	55-64	65-74	75 +	Total 55 +
	Males			
	4.7	3.5	4.4	4.2
	69.1	71.4	63.6	69.0
	12.6	11.5	12.4	12.2
	4.4	8.1	17.5	7.8
	9.1	5.4	2.2	6.7
	Females			
	3.6	5.8	8.9	5.5
	64.2	48.0	22.5	49.7
	10.3	6.7	4.1	7.7
	11.5	33.6	61.0	29.7
	10.4	5.9	3.5	7.3

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.



**Table A3.3 Marital Status of Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Sex and Mother Tongue<sup>1</sup>, Canada, 1971 to 1991**

	Aged 60-64			Aged 75-79		
	English	French	Other	English	French	Other
<b>1971</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
Never Married	8.5	11.8	8.8	11.1	11.7	9.8
Married	81.7	80.2	82.2	66.5	64.8	66.9
Widowed	5.2	4.7	4.2	19.5	21.6	17.9
Separated	2.9	3.1	3.0	1.9	1.9	4.4
Divorced	1.7	0.2	1.8	1.0	0.0	1.0
<b>Females</b>						
Never Married	9.2	16.7	4.0	10.7	19.9	5.0
Married	62.0	60.5	67.2	28.3	25.8	30.2
Widowed	23.3	18.9	24.6	59.8	52.3	62.0
Separated	3.1	3.5	2.4	1.1	1.8	1.6
Divorced	2.4	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.3	1.2
<b>1981</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
Never Married	7.1	9.8	7.2	8.0	9.5	9.8
Married <sup>2</sup>	82.9	79.4	83.9	71.9	69.6	66.7
Widowed	4.1	5.0	3.7	16.5	18.0	18.9
Separated	2.9	3.6	2.5	1.9	2.4	2.6
Divorced	3.1	2.1	2.8	1.7	0.5	1.9
<b>Females</b>						
Never Married	6.1	11.9	4.0	10.3	16.6	3.1
Married <sup>2</sup>	68.4	59.7	67.6	29.3	27.1	30.3
Widowed	19.7	23.6	22.1	57.3	54.5	65.2
Separated	2.4	2.7	2.0	1.6	1.2	0.7
Divorced	3.3	2.0	4.2	1.5	0.5	0.7
<b>1991</b>						
<b>Males</b>						
Never Married	6.4	7.8	4.5	4.9	7.6	3.9
Married	79.7	75.4	85.2	76.2	71.6	79.2
Cohabiting	3.0	4.5	1.7	0.9	2.0	1.2
Widowed	3.6	4.2	3.5	14.3	15.0	12.6
Separated	2.4	2.6	1.9	1.6	1.8	1.7
Divorced	4.9	5.5	3.2	2.1	2.0	1.5
<b>Females</b>						
Never Married	4.9	8.6	3.3	6.6	12.5	3.8
Married	67.3	61.6	70.3	36.7	31.8	34.5
Cohabiting	1.6	2.6	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.6
Widowed	16.9	18.1	18.1	52.4	52.6	57.4
Separated	2.3	3.1	2.3	1.0	1.3	1.5
Divorced	7.0	6.0	5.1	2.9	1.2	2.1

<sup>1</sup> Persons reporting both English and French as mother tongue are classified in the French category.

<sup>2</sup> Includes cohabiting persons.

Source: Public Use Microdata Files, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

**Table A3.4 Percentage of Unmarried Persons Aged 60-64 and 75-79, by Income<sup>1</sup> and Sex, Canada, 1991**

Income	Aged 60-64				Aged 75-79			
	Never Married	Widowed	Separated	Divorced	Never Married	Widowed	Separated	Divorced
<b>Males</b>								
Less Than \$10,000	43.3	21.8	32.3	37.1	15.9	9.5	11.8	10.7
\$10,000 - \$24,999	28.1	38.1	30.1	27.4	62.0	62.4	68.7	65.8
More Than \$25,000	28.6	40.1	37.6	35.6	22.1	28.1	19.5	23.5
<b>Females</b>								
Less Than \$10,000	35.1	30.6	52.3	44.5	18.7	17.8	26.3	12.6
\$10,000 - \$24,999	31.2	49.1	29.4	29.9	56.4	68.9	67.8	74.8
More Than \$25,000	33.7	20.3	18.3	25.6	24.9	13.3	5.9	12.6

<sup>1</sup> Annual individual income.

Source: Public Use Microdata File, 1991 Census of Canada.

**Table A3.5 Average Number of Children Ever Born, Total Children and Surviving Children, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1990**

Age Group	Children Ever Born	Total Children <sup>1</sup>	Surviving Children	
	Males			
	55-64	2.79	2.97	2.90
	65-74	2.92	3.14	3.02
	75 +	2.71	2.82	2.59
	Total	2.82	3.00	2.89
	Females			
	55-64	3.28	3.42	3.25
	65-74	3.28	3.40	3.21
	75 +	2.76	2.86	2.56
	Total	3.18	3.30	3.09

<sup>1</sup> Children ever born, adopted and step-children.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

**Table A3.6 Percent of Population Aged 55 and Over with No Surviving Children and with 5 + Surviving Children<sup>1</sup>, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1990**

Age Group	No Surviving Children	5 + Surviving Children	
	Males		
	55-64	10.2	19.5
	65-74	11.8	20.9
	75 +	21.3	17.5
	Total	12.6	19.7
	Females		
	55-64	9.5	21.6
	65-74	13.5	23.2
	75 +	23.5	19.6
	Total	13.8	21.8

<sup>1</sup> Surviving children of children ever born, adopted and step-children.

Source: General Social Survey, 1990.

**Table A3.7 Living Arrangements of Population<sup>1</sup> Aged 55 and Over, by Sex and Age Group, Canada, 1991**

Age Group	Total Number (in thousands)	Living Arrangement (Percent)							
		Spouse Only	Multi-Generational Arrangements				Other Relatives Only	Alone	Other
			Spouse and Children	Child(ren) (No Spouse)	Parent(s) <sup>2</sup>	Total			
55-64 65-74 75 + Total 55+  55-64 65-74 75 + Total 55+	Males								
	1,157.7	44.9	29.4	1.6	0.8	31.9	8.4	10.1	4.7
	826.3	60.4	13.1	1.5	0.2	14.9	6.8	12.9	5.1
	418.4	58.0	6.2	2.4	0.1	8.7	7.3	19.7	6.4
	2,402.3	52.5	19.8	1.7	0.5	22.0	7.6	12.7	5.1
	Females								
	1,206.4	44.4	19.4	5.8	1.0	26.2	4.3	15.8	9.3
	1,004.5	44.3	6.3	5.3	0.4	12.0	5.7	30.2	7.9
	638.6	22.5	1.8	7.3	0.1	9.1	9.6	49.7	9.2
	2,849.5	39.5	10.9	5.9	0.6	17.3	6.0	28.5	8.8

<sup>1</sup> Persons in private households only.

<sup>2</sup> Includes parent(s) and others.

**Source:** 1991 Census of Canada, special tabulation.



**Table A3.8 Living Arrangements of Population<sup>1</sup> Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Showing Mother Tongue<sup>2</sup>, Place of Birth and Individual Income, Canada, 1991**

	Total Number (In Thousands)	Living Arrangement (Percent)							
		Spouse Only	Multi-Generational Arrangements			Other Relatives Only	Alone	Other	
			Spouse and Children	Child(ren) (No Spouse)	Parent(s) <sup>3</sup> Total				
		Mother Tongue							
55-64									
Males									
English	593.6	49.2	26.0	1.5	0.9	28.4	7.5	10.3	4.6
French	287.8	45.7	28.1	1.9	0.8	30.8	6.5	12.1	5.0
Other	276.2	34.9	38.4	1.7	0.6	40.7	12.1	7.7	4.7
Females									
English	624.6	48.3	17.3	5.4	0.9	23.7	3.8	16.2	8.0
French	319.4	42.6	19.3	6.2	1.2	26.8	3.4	19.0	8.3
Other	262.4	37.6	24.6	6.0	0.8	31.4	6.4	11.1	13.6
65-74									
Males									
English	455.7	64.2	10.8	1.4	0.2	12.4	5.7	13.5	4.2
French	191.7	58.3	14.7	1.8	0.2	16.6	6.0	13.5	5.6
Other	178.9	53.0	17.6	1.5	0.2	19.3	10.2	10.6	6.9
Females									
English	561.5	47.7	5.5	4.6	0.3	10.5	4.7	31.1	6.1
French	244.4	39.7	7.3	6.6	0.3	14.2	5.4	32.8	7.9
Other	198.6	40.4	7.5	5.5	0.4	13.4	9.2	24.2	12.8
75 +									
Males									
English	239.9	61.2	5.0	2.0	0.1	7.0	5.9	20.9	5.0
French	82.1	54.4	8.8	3.7	0.1	12.6	7.4	18.4	7.3
Other	96.4	53.1	7.3	2.1	-	9.4	10.7	17.9	8.9
Females									
English	373.1	24.4	1.5	6.2	0.1	7.7	7.7	53.1	7.0
French	136.0	19.7	2.6	10.3	0.1	12.9	10.0	47.2	10.2
Other	129.5	19.8	1.9	7.1	0.1	9.1	14.7	42.4	14.1
		Place of Birth							
55-64									
Males									
Canada	842.0	48.2	26.2	1.6	1.0	28.8	7.2	11.1	4.7
Other	315.7	36.2	38.0	1.7	0.4	40.2	11.4	7.6	4.7
Females									
Canada	901.0	46.6	17.8	5.6	1.1	24.5	3.6	17.2	8.1
Other	305.5	37.9	24.1	6.3	0.7	31.1	6.2	11.8	12.9
65-74									
Males									
Canada	612.5	62.0	12.0	1.6	0.2	13.8	6.0	13.7	4.6
Other	213.8	55.9	16.5	1.5	0.2	18.1	9.1	10.3	6.6
Females									
Canada	750.8	44.8	6.1	5.3	0.3	11.7	4.8	32.1	6.5
Other	253.7	42.7	7.0	5.2	0.3	12.6	8.5	24.4	11.9
75 +									
Males									
Canada	291.7	59.5	6.3	2.5	0.1	8.8	6.4	19.8	5.5
Other	126.6	54.6	6.1	2.2	-	8.4	9.3	19.5	8.3
Females									
Canada	456.2	23.6	1.9	7.4	0.1	9.4	8.0	51.2	7.8
Other	182.3	19.6	1.5	6.8	0.1	8.4	13.6	45.8	12.6

See notes at the end of the table.

**Table A3.8 Living Arrangements of Population<sup>1</sup> Aged 55 and Over by Sex and Ten-Year Age Group, Showing Mother Tongue<sup>2</sup>, Place of Birth and Individual Income, Canada, 1991 - Concluded**

	Total Number (In Thousands)	Living Arrangement (Percent)							
		Spouse Only	Multi-Generational Arrangements				Other Relatives Only	Alone	Other
			Spouse and Children	Child(ren) (No Spouse)	Parent(s) <sup>3</sup>	Total			
	Individual Income								
55-64									
Males									
Less Than \$25,000	506.4	41.3	24.5	1.7	1.3	27.6	9.7	14.0	7.5
More Than \$25,000	651.3	47.8	33.3	1.6	0.4	35.3	7.3	7.1	2.5
Females									
Less Than \$25,000	984.1	46.1	20.3	5.2	0.9	26.4	4.3	13.6	9.7
More Than \$25,000	222.3	37.3	15.5	8.1	1.6	25.1	4.4	25.6	7.7
65-74									
Males									
Less Than \$25,000	541.1	56.9	13.0	1.7	0.2	14.9	7.7	14.2	6.4
More Than \$25,000	285.2	67.1	13.4	1.3	0.2	14.9	5.0	10.4	2.6
Females									
Less Than \$25,000	874.2	45.7	6.7	5.3	0.3	12.3	5.9	28.0	8.1
More Than \$25,000	130.4	34.6	3.8	5.5	0.6	10.0	4.8	44.5	6.1
75 +									
Males									
Less Than \$25,000	328.4	56.2	6.4	2.5	0.1	8.9	8.0	19.7	7.1
More Than \$25,000	90.0	64.4	5.8	2.0	0.1	7.8	4.7	19.6	3.5
Females									
Less Than \$25,000	563.2	23.1	1.9	7.5	0.1	9.5	10.0	48.0	9.5
More Than \$25,000	75.4	18.3	1.0	5.3	0.1	6.4	6.9	61.8	6.6

<sup>1</sup> Persons in private households.

<sup>2</sup> Persons reporting both English and French as mother tongue are classified in the French category.

<sup>3</sup> Includes parent(s) and others.

**Source:** 1991 Census of Canada, special tabulation.



## References

- ABU-LABAN, S.M. (1980). "The Family Life of Older Canadians", in MARSHALL, V.W. (ed.) *Aging in Canada: Social Perspectives*, Toronto, Fitzhenry and Whiteside.
- ANGEL, R., and TIENDA, M. (1982). "Determinants of Extended Household Structure: Cultural Pattern or Economic Need?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 87, pp.1360-1385.
- ARONSON, J. (1991). "Dutiful Daughters and Undemanding Mothers: Contrasting Images of Giving and Receiving Care in Middle and Later Life", in BAINES, C., EVANS, P., and NEYSMITH, S. (eds.) *Women's Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart.
- BALAKRISHNAN, T.R., LAPIERRE-ADAMCYK, E., and KROTKI, K.J. (1993). *Family and Childbearing in Canada: A Demographic Analysis*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
- BALAKRISHNAN, T.R., RAO, K.V., KROTKI, K.J., and LAPIERRE-ADMCYK, E. (1988). "Age at First Birth and Lifetime Fertility", *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 20, pp.167-174.
- BALAKRISHNAN, T.R., RAO, K.V., LAPIERRE-ADMCYK, E., and KROTKI, K.J. (1987). "A Hazard Model Analysis of the Covariates of Marriage Dissolution in Canada", *Demography*, 24, pp.395-406.
- BASAVARAJAPPA, K.G. (1977). *Marital Status and Nuptiality in Canada*, 1971 Census Profile Studies, Vol. V, Part 1, Ottawa, Statistics Canada, (Catalogue No. 99-704).
- BEAUJOT, R. (1994). "The Demographics of Child Care: What Do Parents Want?" Paper presented at the meetings of the Canadian Population Society, Calgary, June.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1991). *Population Change in Canada: The Challenges of Policy Adaptation*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1977). "Components of Change in the Numbers of Households in Canada, 1951-1971", *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 2(3), pp.305-320.
- BECK, R., and BECK, S.H. (1989). "The Incidence of Extended Households among Middle-Aged Black and White Women", *Journal of Family Issues*, 10, pp.147-168.
- BÉLAND, F. (1987). "Multigenerational Families in Contemporary Perspective", *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 25, pp.147-166.



- BELLE, M., and McQUILLAN, K. (1994). "Births outside Marriage: A Growing Alternative", *Canadian Social Trends*, No. 33, pp.14-17.
- BERGMANN, B.R. (1986). *The Economic Emergence of Women*, New York, Basic.
- BIBBY, R.W., and POSTERSKI, D.C. (1985). *The Emerging Generation*, Toronto, Irwin.
- BOULANGER, P.M., LAMBERT, A., DEBOOSERE, P., and LESTHAEGHE, R. (1994). *La formation des familles : Étude prospective*, Brussels, INBEL.
- BOYD, M., and PRYOR, E.T. (1989). "The Cluttered Nest: The Living Arrangements of Young Adults", *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 14, pp.461-477.
- BUMPASS, L., SWEET, J., and CASTRO MARTIN, T. (1990). "Changing Patterns of Remarriage", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, pp.747-756.
- BURCH, T.K. (1990). *Families in Canada*, 1986 Census Focus on Canada Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 98-127).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1990). "Remarriage of Older Canadians: Description and Interpretation", *Research on Aging*, 12, pp.546-559.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1985). *Family History Survey: Preliminary Findings*, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 99-955).
- BURCH, T.K., and MADAN, A. (1986). *Union Formation and Dissolution: Results from the 1984 Family History Survey*, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 99-963).
- CHAPPELL, N.L., and PRINCE, M.J. (1994). *Social Support among Today's Seniors*, Victoria, University of Victoria Centre on Aging.
- CHE-ALFORD, J., ALLAN, C., and BUTLIN, G. (1994). *Families in Canada*, 1991 Census Focus on Canada Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 96-307E).
- CHERLIN, A.J. (1992). *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.
- CHERLIN, A.J., and WALTERS, P.B. (1981). "Trends in United States Men's and Women's Sex-Role Attitudes, 1972 to 1978", *American Sociological Review*, 46, pp.453-460.
- COLLISHAW, N. (1976). *Fertility in Canada*, 1971 Census Profile Studies, Vol. V, Part 1, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 99-706).
- CONNIDIS, I.A. (1994). "Sibling Support in Older Age", *Journal of Gerontology*, 49, pp.S309-S317.

- \_\_\_\_\_. (1989). *Family Ties and Aging*, Toronto, Butterworths.
- DaVANZO, J., and GOLDSCHIEDER, F.K. (1992). "Coming Home Again: Returns to the Parental Home of Young Adults", *Population Studies*, 44, pp.241-255.
- DeWIT, M.L., and RAJULTON, F. (1992). "Education and Timing of Parenthood among Canadian Women: A Cohort Analysis", *Social Biology*, 39, pp.109-122.
- DUMAS, J. (1994). *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1993*, Current Demographic Analysis Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 91-209E)
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1992). *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1992*, Current Demographic Analysis Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 91-209E).
- DUMAS, J., and PÉRON, Y. (1992). *Marriage and Conjugal Life in Canada*, Current Demographic Analysis Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 91-534E).
- ELDER, G.H., Jr., (ed.) (1985). *Life Course Dynamics, Trajectories and Transitions, 1968-1980*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press.
- GEE, E.M. (1986). "The Life Course of Canadian Women: An Historical and Demographic Analysis", *Social Indicators Research*, 18, pp.263-283.
- GEE, E.M., and KIMBALL, M.M. (1987). *Women and Aging*, Toronto, Butterworths.
- GLICK, P.C. (1977). "Updating the Life Cycle of the Family", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 39, pp.5-13.
- GLICK, P.C., and LIN, S.-L. (1986). "More Young Adults are Living with Their Parents: Who are They", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48(1), pp.107-112.
- GOLDSCHIEDER, F., and GOLDSCHIEDER, C. (1994). "Leaving and Returning Home in 20th Century America", *Population Bulletin*, 48, 4.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1993). *Leaving Home before Marriage: Ethnicity, Familism and Generational Relationships*, Madison, Wis., University of Wisconsin Press.
- GOLDSCHIEDER, F., THORNTON, A., and YOUNG-DeMARCO, L. (1993). "A Portrait of the Nest-Leaving Process in Early Adulthood", *Demography*, 30, pp.683-699.
- GOLDSCHIEDER, F.K., and WAITE, L.J. (1986). "Sex Differences in the Entry into Marriage", *American Journal of Sociology*, 92(1), pp.91-109.

- GOODE, W.S. (1963). *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, New York, Free Press.
- GRINDSTAFF, C.F. (1989). "Socio-Economic Associations with Fertility: A Profile of Women at Age 30", *Canadian Studies in Population*, 16(1), pp.43-60.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1975). "The Baby Bust: Changes in Fertility Patterns in Canada", *Canadian Studies in Population*, 2, pp.15-22.
- GRINDSTAFF, C.F., BALAKRISHNAN, T.R., and MAXIM, P.S. (1989). "Life Course Alternatives: Factors Associated with Differential Timing Patterns in Fertility among Women Recently Completing Childbearing, Canada, 1981", *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 14(4), pp.443-460.
- GUIBERT-LANTOINE, C., et al. (1994). "La cohabitation adulte", *Population et Sociétés*, No. 293, September.
- HAGESTAD, G.O. (1990). "Social Perspectives on the Life Course", in BINSTOCK, R.H., and GEORGE, L.K., (eds.) *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 3rd ed., New York, Academic Press.
- HAREVEN, T.K. (1982). *Family Time and Industrial Time*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1980). "The Life Course and Aging in Historical Perspective", in BACK, K.W., (ed.) *Life Course: Integrative Theories and Exemplary Populations*, Boulder, Col., Westview.
- HARRISON, B.R. (1981). *Living Alone in Canada: Demographic and Economic Perspectives, 1951-1976*, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 98-811).
- HEER, D.M., HODGE, R.W., and FELSON, M. (1985). "The Cluttered Nest: Evidence that Young Adults are More Likely to Live at Home Now than in the Recent Past", *Sociology and Social Research*, 69(3), pp.436-441.
- HOLDEN, K.C., (1988). "Poverty and Living Arrangements among Older Women: Are Changes in Economic Well-Being Underestimated?" *Journals of Gerontology*, 43, pp.S22-S27.
- JONES, C., MARSDEN, L., and TEPPERMAN, L. (1990). *Lives of their Own: The Individualization of Women's Lives*, Toronto, Oxford University Press.
- KEITH, P.M. (1986). "Isolation of the Unmarried in Later Life", *Family Relations*, 35, pp.389-395.
- KOTLIKOFF, L.J., and MORRIS, J.N. (1990). "Why Don't the Elderly Live with their Children: A New Look", in WISE, D.A., (ed.) *Issues in the Economics of Aging*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

- LE BOURDAIS, C., and DESROSIERS, H. (1988). *Trajectoires démographiques et professionnelles : Une analyse longitudinale des processus et des déterminants*, Report for the Review of Demography and its Implications for Economic and Social Policy, Health and Welfare Canada.
- LEE, G.R. (1980). "Kinship in the Seventies: A Decade Review of Research and Theory", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 42, pp.923-934.
- MARCIL-GRATTON, N. (1993). "Growing up with a Single Parent: A Transitional Experience? Some Demographic Measures", in HUDSON, J., and GALAWAY, G.,(eds.) *Single Parent Families: Perspectives on Research and Policy*, Toronto, Thompson Educational.
- MARTIN MATTHEWS, A. (1991). *Widowhood in Later Life*, Toronto, Butterworths.
- McDANIEL, S.A. (1994). *Family and Friends*, General Social Survey Analysis Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 11-612E, No. 9).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1992). "Caring and Sharing: Demographic Aging, Family and the State", in HENDRICKS, J., and ROSENTHAL, C., (eds.) *The Remainder of their Days : Impact of Public Policy on Older Families*, New York, Garland Press.
- McDANIEL, S.A., and McKINNON, A. (1993). "Gender Differences in Informal Support and Coping among Elders: Findings from Canada's 1985 and 1990 General Social Surveys", *Journal of Women and Aging*, 5.
- MITCHELL, B.A., WISTER, A.V., and BURCH, T.K. (1989). "The Family Environment and Leaving the Parental Home", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51, pp.605-613.
- MODELL, J., FURSTENBERG, F.F., Jr., and HERSHBERG, T. (1976). "Social Change and Transitions to Adulthood in Historical Perspective", *Journal of Family History*, 1(1), pp.7-32.
- MOEN, P. (1991). "Transitions in Mid-Life: Women's Work and Family Roles in the 1970s", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53(1), pp.135-150.
- MONCK, H. (1977). *Labour Force Participation in Canada*, 1971 Census Profile Studies, Vol. V, Part 2, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 99-712).
- MORISSETTE, R., MYLES, J., and PICOT, G. (1993). "What is Happening to Earnings Inequality in Canada?" Analytical Studies Branch, Research Paper Series No. 60, Ottawa, Statistics Canada.
- MOTT, F.L., and MOORE, S.F. (1983). "The Tempo of Remarriage among Young American Women", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 45, pp.427-435.



- PAYNE, B.J. (1994). "Separation and Divorce in Later Adult Life", in NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING, *Marital Disruption in Later Life*, Ottawa.
- PRUCHNO, R.A., BLOW, F.C., and SMYER, M.A. (1984). "Life Events and Interdependent Lives", *Human Development*, 27, pp.31-41.
- RAM, B. (1990). *New Trends in the Family: Demographic Facts and Features*, Current Demographic Analysis Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 91-535E).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1988). "Reproduction: The Canadian Family in Transition", *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 20(1), pp.19-30.
- RAM, B., and RAHIM, A. (1993). "Enduring Effects of Women's Early Employment Experiences on Child-Spacing: The Canadian Evidence", *Population Studies*, 47(2), pp.307-317.
- RASHID, A. (1994). *Family Income in Canada*, 1991 Census Focus on Canada Series, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 96-318E).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1991). "Women's Earnings and Family Incomes", *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, (Catalogue No. 75-001E), 3(2), pp.27-37.
- RAVANERA, Z.R., RAJULTON, F., and BURCH, T.K. (1993). "From Home-Leaving to Nest-Emptying: A Cohort Analysis of Life Courses of Canadian Men and Women, 1910-1970", in INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF POPULATION, *International Population Conference, Montreal, 1993*, Liege, IUSSP, II, pp.207-218.
- ROBINSON, P. (1989). "Women's Work Interruptions and the Family: An Exploration of the Family History Survey", in LÉGARÉ, J., BALAKRISHNAN, T.R., and BEAUJOT, R.P., (eds.) *The Family in Crisis: A Demographic Crisis?* Ottawa, Royal Society of Canada, pp.271-285.
- RODGERS, R.H., and WITNEY, G. (1981). "The Family Cycle in Twentieth Century Canada", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 43, pp.727-740.
- ROSENMAYR, L., and KOCKEIS, E. (1963). "Propositions for a Sociological Theory of Aging and the Family", *International Social Science Journal*, 15, pp.410-426.
- ROSENTHAL, C.J. (1985). "Kinkeeping in the Familial Division of Labour", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47, pp.965-974.
- ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ECONOMIC UNION AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS FOR CANADA (1985). *Report*, Ottawa, Supply and Services Canada.
- RYDER, N. (1965). "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change", *American Sociological Review*, 30, pp.843-861.

- STONE, L.O. (1988). *Family and Friendship Ties among Canada's Seniors: An Introductory Report of Findings from the General Social Survey*, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 89-508).
- SWEET, J.A., and BUMPASS, L.L. (1987). *American Families and Households*, New York, Sage.
- THOMAS, K., and WISTER, A. (1984). "Living Arrangements of Older Women: The Ethnic Dimension", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 46, pp.301-311.
- TOWNSON, M. (1994). *The Social Contract for Seniors in Canada: Preparing for the 21st Century*, Ottawa, National Advisory Council on Aging.
- TROST, J. (1977). "The Family Life Cycle: A Problematic Concept", in CUISENIER, J. (ed.) *Le cycle de la vie familiale dans les sociétés européennes*, New Babylon Studies in the Social Sciences No. 28, The Hague, Mouton.
- TRUSSELL, J., and MENKEN, J. (1978). "Early Childbearing and Subsequent Fertility", *Family Planning Perspectives*, 8, 184-190.
- UHLENBERG, P. (1989). "Remarriage: A Life Cycle Perspective", in GREBNIK, E., HORN, C., and MACKENSEN, R., (eds.) *Later Phases of the Family Cycle: Demographic Aspects*, Oxford University Press.
- VEEVERS, J.E. (1977). *The Family in Canada*, 1971 Census Profile Studies, Vol. V, Part 3, Ottawa, Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 99-725).
- WARGON, S. (1978). "Household and Family in Canada: A General Review of Recent Demographic Trends", *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, 8, pp.53-68.
- WISTER, A.V., and BURCH, T.K. (1983). "Fertility and Household Status of Older Women in Canada, 1971", *Canadian Studies in Population*, 10, pp.1-13.
- WOLF, D.A. (1990). "Household Patterns of Older Women", *Research on Aging*, 12, pp.463-486.
- WU, Z., and BALAKRISHNAN, T.R. (1994). "Dissolution of Premarital Cohabitation in Canada", University of Western Ontario, Population Studies Centre, Discussion Paper No. 94-5.
- YOUNG, C. (1987). *Young People Leaving Home in Australia: The Trend towards Independence*, Australian Family Formation Project Monograph No. 9, Melbourne, Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- ZHAO, J., RAJULTON, F., and RAVANERA, Z.R. (forthcoming). "Leaving Parental Homes in Canada: Effects of Family Structures, Gender and Culture", *Canadian Journal of Sociology*.













Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

- *While formerly young people left the parental home to get married, they now leave so they can live an independent life.*
- *In older generations, 20% to 30% of women became widows before their first child left home.*
- *Almost a quarter of Canadians aged 75 and over have no living child.*
- *All the trends observed point to women as the key agents of change in all aspects of the family life course.*
- *The normative pattern of the stages of family life (marriage, children, departure of children, empty nest and widowhood) is based more on men's experience than on women's.*